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THE

CHASE;

A

POEM.

BY

WILLIAM SOMERVILE, ESQ.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES,

STRAND.

1804.

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Shakspeare Printing Office,

CLEVELAND-ROW.

1802.

The following ADDRESS was prefixed to the Quarto Edition of the CHASE, published in 1796.

TO THE PATRONS OF FINE PRINTING.

WHEN the exertions of an Individual to improve his profession are crowned with success, it is certainly the highest gratification his feelings can experience. The very distinguished approbation that attended the publication of the ornamented edition of Goldsmith's Traveller, Deserted Village, and Parnell's Hermit, which was last year offered to the Public as a Specimen of the improved State of Typography in this Country, demands my warmest acknowledgments; and is no less satisfactory to the different Artists who contributed their efforts towards the completion of the work.

The Chase, by Somervile, is now given as a Companion to Goldsmith; and it is almost superfluous to observe, that the subjects which ornament the present volume, being entirely composed of Landscape Scenery and Animals, are adapted, above all others, to display the beauties of Wood Engraving.

Unfortunately for his friends, and the admirers of the art of Engraving on Wood, I have the painful task of announcing the death of my early acquaintance and friend, the younger Mr. Bewick. He died at Ovingham, on the banks of the Tyne, in December last, of a pulmonary complaint. Previously, however, to his departure from London for the place of his nativity, he had prepared, and indeed finished on wood, the whole of the designs, except one, which embellish the Chase; they may therefore literally be considered as the last efforts of this ingenious and much to be lamented Artist.

In executing the Engravings, his Brother, Mr. Thomas Bewick, has bestowed every possible care; and the beautiful effect produced from their joint labours will, it is presumed, fully meet the approbation of the Subscribers.

Shakspeare Printing Office,
May 20th, 1796.

W. BULMER.

WILLIAM SOMERVILE.

THAT celebrity has not always been the attendant on merit, many mortifying examples may be produced to prove. Of those who have by their writings conferred a lasting obligation on their country, and at the same time raised its reputation, many have been suffered to descend into the grave without any memorial; and when the time has arrived, in which their works have raised a curiosity to be informed of the general tenour, or petty habits of their lives, always amusing, and frequently useful, little more is to be collected, than that they once lived, and are no more.

Such has been the fate of William Somervile, who may, with great propriety, be called the Poet of the Chase; and of whom it is to be regretted that so few circumstances are known. By the neglect of friends while living, and the want of curiosity in the publick, at the time of his death, he has been deprived of that portion of fame to which his merits have entitled him; and though the worth of his works is now universally acknowledged, his amiable qualities, and he is said to have possessed many,

are forgotten and irrevocably lost to the world. In the lapse of more than half a century, all his surviving friends, from whom any information could be derived, are swept away. The little which has been hitherto collected concerning him, will be found, on examination, not perfectly satisfactory; and of that little, some part is less accurate than our respect for so excellent a writer leads us to wish it had been.

He was of a family of great antiquity in the county of Warwick. His ancestor came into England with William the Conqueror, and left two sons. The eldest, from whom our poet was descended, had Whichnour, in the county of Stafford, for his inheritance; and the other, the ancestor of Lord Somervile, settled in the kingdom of Scotland. The eldest branch afterwards removed to Ederston, in the county of Warwick; which manor Thomas Somervile became possessed of, by marrying Joan, daughter and sole heir of John Aylesbury, the last heir male who owned that estate. This Thomas died in the year 1501, leaving one son, Robert, who also left one son, John, who was the father of William Somervile, whose only son, Sir William Somervile, Knight, left a posthumous son, William, who died in 1676, having married Anne, daughter of John

Viscount Tracey, of the kingdom of Ireland, by whom he had eleven sons and five daughters. Of this numerous progeny, none seem to have survived except Robert, who married Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Sir Charles Wolseley, and by her became the father of three sons; 1. our author; 2. Robert, who was killed in India; and, 3. Edward, who was of New College, Oxford; where he took the degree of B. C. L. December 7, 1710, and D. C. L. April 26, 1722, and died between the years 1733 and 1742.

William Somervile, our poet, was born in the year 1677, at Ederston, "near Avona's winding stream," as he himself records in one of his poems. At the age of thirteen, in the year 1690, he was admitted a scholar of Winchester College, and continued there until the year 1694, when he was sent to New College, Oxford. It does not appear, as Dr. Johnson observes, that in the places of his education, he exhibited any uncommon proofs of genius or literature. He is said, by the same author, to have been elected a Fellow of New College; but as he does not seem to have taken any degree at the university, that assertion may be doubted. It is more probable, that he soon quitted the college for the country,

where his powers were first displayed, and where he was distinguished as a poet, a gentleman, and a skilful and useful justice of the peace.

How soon he began to write verses we are not informed, there being few dates in his poems; but it is certain that he was no early candidate for literary fame. He had reached the age of fifty years, before he presented any of his works to the publick, or was the least known. In the year 1727, he published his first volume of Poems; the merit of which, like most collections of the same kind, is various. Dr. Johnson says, that, "though, perhaps, he has "not, in any mode of poetry, reached such excel- "lence as to raise much envy, it may commonly be "said, at least, that he 'writes very well for a gentle- "man.' His serious pieces are sometimes elevated, "and his trifles are sometimes elegant. In his verses "to Addison, the couplet which mentions *Clio*, is "written with the most exquisite delicacy of praise: "it exhibits one of those happy strokes that are "seldom attained. In his Odes to Marlborough, "there are beautiful lines; but in the second ode, "he shows that he knew little of his hero, when he "talks of his private virtues. His subjects are com- "monly such as require no great depth of thought,

" or energy of expression. His fables are generally " stale, and therefore excite no curiosity. Of his " favourite, *the Two Springs*, the fiction is unnatural, " and the moral inconsequential. In his tales, there " is too much coarseness, with too little care of lan- " guage, and not sufficient rapidity of narration." To the justice of this estimate, it may be doubted whether an unreserved assent will be readily given. Dr. Johnson has often dealt out his praise with too scanty and parsimonious a hand.

His success as an author, whatever were his merits at that time, was however sufficient not to discourage his further efforts. In the year 1735, he produced the work now republished: a work, which has scarce ever been spoken of but to be commended, though Dr. Johnson, whose habits of life, and bodily defects, were little calculated to taste the beauties of this poem, or to enter into the spirit of it, coldly says, " to this poem, praise cannot be totally de- " nied." He adds, however, " he (the author,) is " allowed by sportsmen to write with great intelli- " gence of his subject, which is the first requisite " to excellence; and though it is impossible to in- " terest common readers of verse in the dangers or " the pleasures of the chase, he has done all that

" transition and variety could easily effect; and " has, with great propriety, enlarged his plan by the " modes of hunting used in other countries." Dr. Warton observes, that he " writes with all the spirit " and fire of an eager sportsman. The description " of the hunting the hare, the fox, and the stag, are " extremely spirited, and place the very objects " before our eyes: of such consequence is it for a " man to write on that, which he hath frequently " felt with pleasure."

Many other testimonies might be added; but its best praise, is the continued succession of new editions since its original publication.

As Mr. Somervile advanced in life, his attention to literary pursuits increased. In the year 1740, he produced " Hobbinol, or the Rural Games;" a burlesque poem, which Dr. Warton has classed among those best deserving notice, of the mock heroick species. It is dedicated to Mr. Hogarth, as the greatest master in the burlesque way; and at the conclusion of his preface, the author says, " If any person should want a key to this poem, " his curiosity shall be gratified. I shall in plain " words tell him, ' it is a satire against the luxu- " ry, the pride, the wantonness, and quarrelsome

" temper of the middling sort of people.' As these " are the proper and genuine cause of that barefaced " knavery, and almost universal poverty, which " reign without control in every place; and as to " these we owe our many bankrupt farmers, our " trade decayed, and lands uncultivated, the author " has reason to hope, that no honest man, who loves " his country, will think this short reproof out of " season; for, perhaps, this merry way of bantering " men into virtue, may have a better effect than the " most serious admonitions, since many who are " proud to be thought immoral, are not very fond " of being ridiculous."

He did not yet close his literary labours. In the year 1742, a few months only before his death, he published *Field Sports;* a poem addressed to the Prince of Wales; and from Lady Luxborough's letters we learn, that he had translated Voltaire's Alzira, which, with several other pieces not published, were in her possession. One of these, written towards the close of life, is so descriptive of the old age of a sportsman, and exhibits so pleasing a picture of the temper and turn of mind of the author, we shall here insert. It is an " Address to his Elbow " Chair, new clothed."

My dear companion, and my faithful friend!
If Orpheus taught the listening oaks to bend,
If stones and rubbish, at Amphion's call,
Danced into form, and built the Theban wall;
Why should'st not thou attend my humble lays,
And hear my grateful harp resound thy praise?
True, thou art spruce and fine; a very beau;
But what are trappings, and external show?
To real worth alone I make my court;
Knaves are my scorn, and coxcombs are my sport.
Once I beheld thee, far less trim and gay,
Ragged, disjointed, and to worms a prey,
The safe retreat of every lurking mouse,
Derided, shunn'd, the lumber of my house!
Thy robe, how changed from what it was before!
Thy velvet robe, which pleased my sires of yore!
'Tis thus capricious fortune wheels us round;
Aloft we mount—then tumble to the ground.
Yet grateful then, my constancy I proved;
I knew thy worth; my friend in rags I loved;
I loved thee more; nor, like a courtier, spurn'd
My benefactor when the tide was turn'd.
With conscious shame, yet frankly I confess,
That in my youthful days—I loved thee less.
Where vanity, where pleasure call'd, I stray'd;

And every wayward appetite obey'd.
But sage experience taught me how to prize
Myself; and how, this world: she bade me rise
To nobler flights, regardless of a race
Of factious emmets; pointed where to place
My bliss, and lodged me in thy soft embrace.
  Here, on thy yielding down, I sit secure;
And, patiently, what Heaven has sent, endure;
From all the futile cares of business free;
Not fond of life, but yet content to be:
Here mark the fleeting hours; regret the past;
And seriously prepare to meet the last.
  So safe on shore, the pension'd sailor lies,
And all the malice of the storm defies;
With ease of body bless'd, and peace of mind,
Pities the restless crew he left behind;
Whilst, in his cell, he meditates alone,
On his great voyage, to the world unknown.

To those who have derived entertainment or instruction from Mr. Somervile's works, the information will be received with pain, that the latter part of his life did not pass without those embarrassments which attend a deranged state of pecuniary circumstances. Shenstone, who in this particular much

resembled him, thus notices his lamentable catastrophe. "Our old friend Somervile is dead! I did "not imagine I could have been so sorry as I find "myself on this occasion. Sublatum quærimus. I "can now excuse all his foibles; impute them to age, "and to distress of circumstances: the last of these "considerations wrings my very soul to think on. "For a man of high spirit, conscious of having (at "least in one production,) generally pleased the "world, to be plagued and threatened by wretches "that are low in every sense; to be forced to drink "himself into pains of the body, in order to get rid "of the pains of the mind, is a misery which I can "well conceive; because I may, without vanity, "esteem myself his equal in point of economy, and, "consequently, ought to have an eye to his misfor-"tunes." Dr. Johnson says, "his distresses need "not to be much pitied; his estate is said to have "been fifteen hundred a year, which by his death "devolved to Lord Somervile of Scotland. His "mother, indeed, who lived till ninety, had a join-"ture of six hundred." This remark is made with less consideration than might have been expected, from so close an observer of mankind. Such an estate, incumbered in such a manner, and perhaps

otherwise, frequently leaves the proprietor in a very uneasy situation, with but a scanty pittance; and it is evident, that our author was by no means an economist. Shenstone says, "for whatever the world "might esteem in poor Somervile, I really find, upon "critical inquiry, that I loved him for nothing so "much as his flocci-nauci-nihili-pili-fication of "money." Lady Luxborough declares him to have been a gentleman who deserved the esteem of every good man, and one who was regretted accordingly.

He died July 19, 1742, and was buried at Wotton, near Henley on Arden. He had been married to Mary, daughter of Hugh Bethel, of Yorkshire, who died before him, without leaving any issue. By his will, proved the third of September, 1742, he remembered New College, the place of his education, by leaving to the master and fellows, fifteen volumes of Montfaucon's Antiquities, and Addison's works, for their library; and, apparently to encourage provincial literature, he bequeathed twenty pounds to purchase books for the parish library of the place of his residence.

PREFACE

BY

THE AUTHOR.

THE old and infirm have at least this privilege, that they can recall to their minds those scenes of joy in which they once delighted, and ruminate over their past pleasures, with a satisfaction almost equal to the first enjoyment; for those ideas, to which any agreeable sensation is annexed, are easily excited, as leaving behind them the most strong and permanent impressions. The amusements of our youth are the boast and comfort of our declining years. The ancients carried this notion even yet further, and supposed their heroes, in the Elysian fields, were fond of the very same diversions they exercised on earth: death itself could not wean them from the accustomed sports and gaities of life.

Pars in gramineis exercent membra palæstris,
Contendunt ludo, et fulvâ luctantur arenâ:
Pars pedibus plaudunt choreas, et carmina dicunt.——
Arma procul, currusque virûm miratur inanes.
Stant terrâ defixæ hastæ, passimque soluti
Per campos pascuntur equi. Quæ gratia currûm

Armorumque fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentes
Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repôstos.

VIRG. ÆN. VI.

Part, on the grassy cirque, their pliant limbs
In wrestling exercise, or on the sands,
Struggling, dispute the prize: part lead the ring,
Or swell the chorus with alternate lays.
The chief their arms admires, their empty cars,
Their lances fix'd in earth. The unharness'd steeds
Graze unrestrain'd; horses, and cars, and arms,
All the same fond desires, and pleasing cares,
Still haunt their shades, and after death survive.

I hope, therefore, I may be indulged, even by the more grave and censorious part of mankind, if, at my leisure hours, I run over, in my elbow-chair, some of those chases, which were once the delight of a more vigorous age. It is an entertaining, and, as I conceive, a very innocent amusement. The result of these rambling imaginations will be found in the following poem; which if equally diverting to my readers, as to myself, I shall have gained my end. I have intermixed the preceptive parts with so many descriptions, and digressions, in the Georgick manner, that I hope they will not be tedious. I am sure they are very necessary to be well understood by any gentleman, who would enjoy this noble sport in full perfection. In this, at least, I may comfort myself, that I cannot trespass upon their patience more than Markham, Blome, and the other prose writers upon this subject.

It is most certain, that hunting was the exercise of the greatest

heroes of antiquity. By this they formed themselves for war; and their exploits against wild beasts were a prelude to their future victories. Xenophon says, that almost all the ancient heroes, Nestor, Theseus, Castor, Pollux, Ulysses, Diomedes, Achilles, &c. were Μαθηταὶ Κυνηγεσιῶν, disciples of hunting; being taught carefully that art, as what would be highly serviceable to them in military discipline. *Xen. Cynegetic.* And Pliny observes, those who were designed for great captains, were first taught, "certare cum fugacibus feris cursu, cum audacibus "robore, cum callidus astu:"—to contest with the swiftest wild beasts in speed; with the boldest in strength; with the most cunning, in craft and subtilty. *Plin. Panegyr.* And the Roman emperors, in those monuments they erected to transmit their actions to future ages, made no scruple to join the glories of the chase to their most celebrated triumphs. Neither were their poets wanting to do justice to this heroick exercise. Beside that of Oppian in Greek, we have several poems in Latin upon hunting. Gratius was contemporary with Ovid; as appears by this verse,

Aptaque venanti Gratius arma dabit.

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Gratius shall arm the huntsman for the chase.

But of his works only some fragments remain. There are many others of more modern date. Among these Nemesianus, who seems very much superiour to Gratius, though of a more degenerate age. But only a fragment of his first book is preserved. We might indeed have expected to have seen it treated more

at large by Virgil in his third Georgick, since it is expressly part of his subject. But he has favoured us only with ten verses; and what he says of dogs, relates wholly to greyhounds and mastiffs:

Veloces Spartæ catulos, acremque Molossum.

GEOR. III.

The greyhound swift, and mastiff's furious breed.

And he directs us to feed them with butter-milk.—" Pasce sero " pingui." He has, it is true, touched upon the chase in the fourth and seventh books of the Æneid. But it is evident, that the art of hunting is very different now, from what it was in his days, and very much altered and improved in these latter ages. It does not appear to me, that the ancients had any notion of pursuing wild beasts, by the scent only, with a regular and well-disciplined pack of hounds; and therefore they must have passed for poachers amongst our modern sportsmen. The muster-roll given us by Ovid, in his story of Actæon, is of all sorts of dogs, and of all countries. And the description of the ancient hunting, as we find it in the antiquities of Pere de Montfaucon, taken from the sepulchre of the Nasos, and the arch of Constantine, has not the least trace of the manner now in use.

Whenever the ancients mention dogs following by the scent, they mean no more than finding out the game by the nose of one single dog. This was as much as they knew of the " odora " canum vis." Thus Nemesianus says,

Odorato noscunt vestigia prato,
Atque etiam leporum secreta cubilia monstrant.

They challenge on the mead the recent stains,
And trail the hare unto her secret form.

Oppian has a long description of these dogs in his first book, from ver. 479 to 526. And here, though he seems to describe the hunting of the hare by the scent, through many turnings and windings, yet he really says no more than that one of those hounds, which he calls ἰχνευτῆρες, finds out the game. For he follows the scent no further than the hare's form; from whence, after he has started her, he pursues her by sight. I am indebted for these two last remarks to a reverend and very learned gentleman, whose judgment in the belles-lettres nobody disputes, and whose approbation gave me the assurance to publish this poem.

Oppian also observes, that the best sort of these finders were brought from Britain; this island having always been famous, as it is at this day, for the best breed of hounds, for persons the best skilled in the art of hunting, and for horses the most enduring to follow the chase. It is, therefore, strange that none of our poets have yet thought it worth their while to treat of this subject; which is, without doubt, very noble in itself, and very well adapted to receive the most beautiful turns of poetry. Perhaps our poets have no great genius for hunting. Yet, I hope, my brethren of the couples, by encouraging this first, but imperfect essay, will shew the world they have at least some taste for poetry.

The ancients esteemed hunting, not only as a manly and

warlike exercise, but as highly conducive to health. The famous Galen recommends it above all others, as not only exercising the body, but giving delight and entertainment to the mind. And he calls the inventors of this art wise men, and well-skilled in human nature. *Lib. de parvæ pilæ exercitio.*

The gentlemen, who are fond of a jingle at the close of every verse, and think no poem truly musical but what is in rhyme, will here find themselves disappointed. If they will be pleased to read over the short preface before the Paradise Lost, Mr. Smith's Poem in memory of his friend Mr. John Philips, and the Archbishop of Cambray's Letter to Monsieur Fontenelle, they may, probably, be of another opinion. For my own part, I shall not be ashamed to follow the example of Milton, Philips, Thomson, and all our best tragic writers.

Some few terms of art are dispersed here and there; but such only as are absolutely requisite to explain my subject. I hope, in this, the criticks will excuse me; for I am humbly of opinion, that the affectation, and not the necessary use, is the proper object of their censure.

But I have done. I know the impatience of my brethren, when a fine day, and the concert of the kennel, invite them abroad. I shall therefore leave my reader to such diversion, as he may find in the poem itself.

En age, segnes
Rumpe moras; vocat ingenti clamore Cithæron,
Taygetique canes, domitrixque Epidaurus equorum;
Et vox assensu nemorum ingeminata remugit.

VIRG. GEORG. III.

Hark away!
Cast far behind the lingering cares of life:
Cithæron calls aloud, and, in full cry,
Thy hounds, Taygetus. Epidaurus trains
For us the generous steed; the hunter's shouts,
And cheering cries, assenting woods return.

BOOK
I

Argument.

The subject proposed. Address to his Royal Highness the Prince. The origin of hunting. The rude and unpolished manner of the first hunters. Beasts at first hunted for food and sacrifice. The grant made by God to man of the beasts, &c. The regular manner of hunting first brought into this island by the Normans. The best hounds and best horses bred here. The advantage of this exercise to us, as islanders. Address to gentlemen of estates. Situation of the kennel, and its several courts. The diversion and employment of hounds in the kennel. The different sorts of hounds for each different chase. Description of a perfect hound. Of sizing and sorting of hounds; the middle-sized hound recommended. Of the large deep-mouthed hound for hunting the stag and otter. Of the lime hound; their use on the borders of England and Scotland. A physical account of scents. Of good and bad scenting days. A short admonition to my brethren of the couples.

THE CHASE I sing, hounds, and their various
breed,
And no less various use. O thou, great Prince!
Whom Cambria's towering hills proclaim their lord,
Deign thou to hear my bold, instructive song.
While grateful citizens, with pompous shew,
Rear the triumphal arch, rich with the exploits
Of thy illustrious house; while virgins pave
Thy way with flowers, and, as the royal youth
Passing they view, admire, and sigh in vain;
While crowded theatres, too fondly proud
Of their exotick minstrels, and shrill pipes,
The price of manhood, hail thee with a song,
And airs soft-warbling; my hoarse-sounding horn

Invites thee to the chase, the sport of kings;
Image of war, without its guilt. The Muse
Aloft on wing shall soar, conduct with care
Thy foaming courser o'er the steepy rock,
Or, on the river bank, receive thee safe,
Light-bounding o'er the wave, from shore to shore.
Be thou our great protector, gracious youth!
And if, in future times, some envious prince,
Careless of right, and guileful, should invade
Thy Britain's commerce, or should strive, in vain,
To wrest the balance from thy equal hand,
Thy hunter-train, in cheerful green array'd,
A band undaunted, and innured to toils,
Shall compass thee around, die at thy feet,
Or hew thy passage through the embattled foe,
And clear thy way to fame: inspired by thee,
The nobler chase of glory shall pursue,
Through fire, and smoke, and blood, and fields of death.
Nature, in her productions slow, aspires,
By just degrees, to reach perfection's highth:
So mimick art works leisurely, till time
Improve the piece, or wise experience give
The proper finishing. When Nimrod bold,
That mighty hunter, first made war on beasts,
And stain'd the woodland green with purple dye,

New, and unpolish'd, was the huntsman's art;
No stated rule, his wanton will his guide.
With clubs and stones, rude implements of war,
He arm'd his savage bands, a multitude
Untrain'd: of twining osiers form'd, they pitch
Their artless toils, then range the desert hills,
And scour the plains below: the trembling herd
Start at the unusual sound, and clamorous shout,
Unheard before; surprised, alas! to find
Man now their foe, whom erst they deem'd their lord;
But mild, and gentle, and by whom, as yet,
Secure they grazed. Death stretches o'er the plain,
Wide-wasting, and grim slaughter, red with blood:
Urged on by hunger keen, they wound, they kill;
Their rage, licentious, knows no bound: at last,
Incumber'd with their spoils, joyful they bear,
Upon their shoulders broad, the bleeding prey.
Part on their altars smokes a sacrifice
To that all-gracious Power, whose bounteous hand
Supports his wide creation: what remains,
On living coals they broil, inelegant
Of taste, nor skill'd, as yet, in nicer arts
Of pamper'd luxury. Devotion pure,
And strong necessity, thus first began
The chase of beasts; though bloody was the deed,

Yet without guilt: for the green herb, alone,
Unequal to sustain man's labouring race,
Now every moving thing that lived on earth,
Was granted him for food. So just is Heaven,
To give us in proportion to our wants.
  Or chance, or industry, in after-times,
Some few improvements made; but short, as yet,
Of due perfection. In this isle, remote,
Our painted ancestors were slow to learn,
To arms devote, of the politer arts
Nor skill'd, nor studious; till, from Neustria's coasts,
Victorious William to more decent rules
Subdued our Saxon fathers, taught to speak
The proper dialect; with horn and voice
To cheer the busy hound, whose well-known cry
His listening peers approve with joint acclaim.
From him successive huntsmen learn'd to join,
In bloody social leagues, the multitude
Dispersed, to size, to sort their various tribes,
To rear, feed, hunt, and discipline the pack.
  Hail, happy Britain! highly favour'd isle,
And Heaven's peculiar care; to thee 'tis given
To train the sprightly steed, more fleet than those
Begot by winds, or the celestial breed
That bore the great Pelides through the press

Of heroes arm'd, and broke their crowded ranks;
Which, proudly neighing, with the sun begins
Cheerful his course; and ere his beams decline,
Has measured half thy surface unfatigued.
In thee alone, fair land of liberty!
Is bred the perfect hound, in scent and speed
As yet unrivall'd; while in other climes
Their virtue fails, a weak degenerate race.
In vain malignant steams, and winter fogs,
Load the dull air, and hover round our coasts;
The huntsman, ever gay, robust, and bold,
Defies the noxious vapour, and confides
In this delightful exercise, to raise
His drooping head, and cheer his heart with joy.
Ye vigorous youths, by smiling fortune bless'd
With large demesnes, hereditary wealth,
Heap'd copious by your wise forefathers' care,
Hear, and attend; while I the means reveal
To enjoy those pleasures, for the weak too strong,
Too costly for the poor: to rein the steed
Swift-stretching o'er the plain, to cheer the pack,
Opening in concerts of harmonious joy,
But breathing death. What though the gripe severe
Of brazen-fisted time, and slow disease
Creeping through every vein, and nerve unstrung,

Afflict my shatter'd frame, undaunted still,
Fix'd as the mountain ash, that braves the bolts
Of angry Jove, though blasted, yet unfall'n;
Still can my soul, in fancy's mirrour, view
Deeds glorious once, recall the joyous scene
In all its splendours deck'd, o'er the full bowl
Recount my triumphs pass'd, urge others on
With hand and voice, and point the winding way:
Pleased with that social sweet garrulity,
The poor disbanded veteran's sole delight.
  First, let the kennel be the huntsman's care;
Upon some little eminence erect,
And fronting to the ruddy dawn; its courts
On either hand wide opening to receive
The sun's all-cheering beams, when mild he shines,
And gilds the mountain tops. For much the pack
(Roused from their dark alcoves) delight to stretch
And bask in his invigorating ray:
Warn'd by the streaming light, and merry lark,
Forth rush the jolly clan; with tuneful throats
They carol loud, and, in grand chorus join'd,
Salute the new-born day. For not alone
The vegetable world, but men and brutes
Own his reviving influence, and joy
At his approach. Fountain of light! if chance

Some envious cloud veil thy refulgent brow,
In vain the Muses aid, untouch'd, unstrung,
Lies my mute harp, and thy desponding bard
Sits darkly musing o'er the unfinish'd lay.
Let no Corinthian pillars prop the dome,
A vain expense, on charitable deeds
Better disposed, to clothe the tatter'd wretch
Who shrinks beneath the blast, to feed the poor,
Pinch'd with afflictive want: for use, not state,
Gracefully plain let each apartment rise.
O'er all let cleanliness preside; no scraps
Bestrew the pavement, and no half-pick'd bones,
To kindle fierce debate, or to disgust
That nicer sense, on which the sportsman's hope,
And all his future triumphs, must depend.
Soon as the growling pack, with eager joy,
Have lapp'd their smoking viands, morn or eve,
From the full cistern lead the ductile streams,
To wash thy court, well-paved; nor spare thy pains,
For much to health will cleanliness avail.
Seek'st thou for hounds to climb the rocky steep,
And brush the entangled covert, whose nice scent
O'er greasy fallows, and frequented roads,
Can pick the dubious way? Banish far off
Each noisome stench, let no offensive smell

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Invade thy wide inclosure, but admit
The nitrous air, and purifying breeze.
Water and shade no less demand thy care:
In a large square the adjacent field inclose;
There plant, in equal ranks, the spreading elm,
Or fragrant lime; most happy thy design,
If, at the bottom of thy spacious court,
A large canal, fed by the crystal brook,
From its transparent bosom shall reflect
Downward thy structure and inverted grove.
Here, when the sun's too potent gleams annoy
The crowded kennel, and the drooping pack,
Restless and faint, loll their unmoisten'd tongues,
And drop their feeble tails, to cooler shades
Lead forth the panting tribe; soon shalt thou find
The cordial breeze their fainting hearts revive:
Tumultuous soon they plunge into the stream,
There lave their reeking sides, with greedy joy
Gulp down the flying wave; this way and that,
From shore to shore, they swim, while clamour loud,
And wild uproar, torments the troubled flood;
Then on the sunny bank they roll and stretch
Their dripping limbs; or else in wanton rings
Coursing around, pursuing and pursued,
The merry multitude disporting play.

But here, with watchful and observant eye,
Attend their frolicks, which too often end
In bloody broils and death. High o'er thy head
Wave thy resounding whip, and, with a voice
Fierce-menacing, o'er-rule the stern debate,
And quench their kindling rage; for oft, in sport
Begun, combat ensues; growling they snarl,
Then on their haunches rear'd, rampant they seize
Each other's throats, with teeth and claws, in gore
Besmear'd, they wound, they tear, till on the ground,
Panting, half dead, the conquering champion lies:
Then sudden all the base ignoble crowd,
Loud-clamouring, seize the helpless worried wretch,
And, thirsting for his blood, drag different ways
His mangled carcase on the ensanguined plain.
O breasts of pity void! to oppress the weak,
To point your vengeance at the friendless head,
And, with one mutual cry, insult the fall'n!
Emblem too just of man's degenerate race.
Others apart, by native instinct led,
Knowing instructor! 'mong the ranker grass
Cull each salubrious plant, with bitter juice
Concoctive stored, and potent to allay
Each vicious ferment. Thus the hand divine
Of Providence, beneficent and kind

To all his creatures, for the brutes prescribes
A ready remedy, and is himself
Their great physician! Now grown stiff with age,
And many a painful chase, the wise old hound,
Regardless of the frolick pack, attends
His master's side, or slumbers, at his ease,
Beneath the bending shade; there, many a ring
Runs o'er in dreams; now on the doubtful foil
Puzzles perplex'd, or doubles intricate
Cautious unfolds; then, wing'd with all his speed,
Bounds o'er the lawn to seize his panting prey,
And in imperfect whimp'ring speaks his joy.
A different hound, for every diff'rent chase,
Select with judgment; nor the timorous hare
O'ermatch'd destroy, but leave that vile offence
To the mean, murd'rous, coursing crew, intent
On blood and spoil. Oh blast their hopes, just Heaven!
And all their painful drudgeries repay
With disappointment, and severe remorse.
But husband thou thy pleasures, and give scope
To all her subtle play: by nature led,
A thousand shifts she tries; to unravel these
The industrious beagle twists his waving tail,
Through all her labyrinths pursues, and rings

Her doleful knell. See there, with countenance blithe,
And with a courtly grin, the fawning hound
Salutes thee, cowering, his wide opening nose
Upward he curls, and his large sloe-black eyes
Melt in soft blandishments, and humble joy;
His glossy skin, or yellow-pied, or blue,
In lights or shades by nature's pencil drawn,
Reflects the various tints; his ears and legs,
Fleckt here and there, in gay enamell'd pride
Rival the speckled pard; his rush-grown tail
O'er his broad back bends in ample arch;
On shoulders clean, upright and firm he stands;
His round cat foot, straight hams, and wide-spread thighs,
And his low-dropping chest, confess his speed,
His strength, his wind, or on the steepy hill,
Or far-extended plain; in every part
So well proportion'd, that the nicer skill
Of Phidias himself can't blame thy choice.
Of such compose thy pack: but here a mean
Observe; nor the large hound prefer, of size
Gigantick; he in the thick-woven covert
Painfully tugs, or in the thorny brake
Torn and embarrass'd, bleeds: but if too small,
The pigmy brood in every furrow swims;

Moil'd in the clogging clay, panting they lag
Behind inglorious; or else shivering they creep,
Benumb'd and faint, beneath the shelt'ring thorn.
For hounds of middle size, active and strong,
Will better answer all thy various ends,
And crown thy pleasing labours with success.
As some brave captain, curious and exact,
By his fix'd standard forms, in equal ranks,
His gay battalion, as one man they move,
Step after step, their size the same, their arms
Far gleaming, dart the same united blaze:
Reviewing generals his merit own;
How regular! how just! and all his cares
Are well repaid, if mighty George approve.
So model thou thy pack, if honour touch
Thy generous soul, and the world's just applause.
But above all take heed, nor mix thy hounds
Of diff'rent kinds; discordant sounds shall grate
Thy ears offended, and a lagging line
Of babbling curs disgrace thy broken pack.
But if the amphibious otter be thy chase,
Or stately stag, that o'er the woodland reigns;
Or if the harmonious thunder of the field
Delight thy ravish'd ears; the deep-flew'd hound
Breed up with care, strong, heavy, slow, but sure,

Whose ears, down-hanging from his thick round head,
Shall sweep the morning dew; whose clanging voice
Awake the mountain echo in her cell,
And shake the forests: the bold Talbot kind
Of these the prime, as white as Alpine snows;
And great their use of old. Upon the banks
Of Tweed, slow-winding through the vale, the seat
Of war and rapine once, ere Britons knew
The sweets of peace, or Anna's dread commands
To lasting leagues the haughty rivals awed,
There dwelt a pilfering race; well train'd and skill'd
In all the mysteries of theft, the spoil
Their only substance, feuds and war their sport:
Not more expert in every fraudful art
The arch felon was of old, who by the tail
Drew back his lowing prize: in vain his wiles,
In vain the shelter of the covering rock,
In vain the sooty cloud, and ruddy flames,
That issued from his mouth; for soon he paid
His forfeit life; a debt how justly due
To wrong'd Alcides, and avenging Heaven!
Veil'd in the shades of night, they ford the stream,
Then prowling far and near, whate'er they seize
Becomes their prey; nor flocks nor herds are safe,
Nor stalls protect the steer, nor strong-barr'd doors

Secure the favourite horse. Soon as the morn
Reveals his wrongs, with ghastly visage wan,
The plunder'd owner stands, and from his lips
A thousand thronging curses burst their way:
He calls his stout allies, and in a line
His faithful hound he leads; then, with a voice
That utters loud his rage, attentive cheers:
Soon the sagacious brute, his curling tail
Flourish'd in air, low-bending plies around
His busy nose, the steaming vapour snuffs
Inquisitive, nor leaves one turf untried;
Till, conscious of the recent stains, his heart
Beats quick; his snuffling nose, his active tail,
Attest his joy; then, with deep-opening mouth,
That makes the welkin tremble, he proclaims
The audacious felon; foot by foot he marks
His winding way, while all the listening crowd
Applaud his reasonings. O'er the watery ford,
Dry sandy heaths, and stony barren hills,
O'er beaten paths, with men and beasts distain'd,
Unerring he pursues; till at the cot
Arrived, and seizing by his guilty throat
The caitiff vile, redeems the captive prey:
So exquisitely delicate his sense!

Should some more curious sportsman here inquire,

Whence this sagacity, this wond'rous power,
Of tracing step by step, or man or brute;
What guide invisible points out their way,
O'er the dank marsh, bleak hill, and sandy plain?
The courteous Muse shall the dark cause reveal.
The blood that from the heart incessant rolls
In many a crimson tide, then here and there,
In smaller rills disparted, as it flows,
Propell'd, the serous particles evade
Through the open pores, and, with the ambient air
Entangling, mix: as fuming vapours rise,
And hang upon the gently-purling brook,
There by the incumbent atmosphere compress'd.
The panting chase grows warmer as he flies,
And through the net-work of the skin perspires;
Leaves a long streaming trail behind, which, by
The cooler air condensed, remains, unless
By some rude storm dispersed, or rarefied
By the meridian sun's intenser heat:
To every shrub the warm effluvia cling,
Hang on the grass, impregnate earth and skies:
With nostrils opening wide, o'er hill, o'er dale,
The vigorous hounds pursue, with every breath
Inhale their grateful steam; quick pleasures sting
Their tingling nerves, while they their thanks repay,

And in triumphant melody confess
The titillating joy. Thus on the air
Depend the hunter's hopes. When ruddy streaks
At eve, forebode a blust'ring stormy day,
Or lowering clouds blacken the mountain's brow;
When nipping frosts, and the keen biting blasts
Of the dry parching east menace the trees,
With tender blossoms teeming, kindly spare
Thy sleeping pack, in their warm beds of straw
Low-sinking, at their ease; listless they shrink
Into some dark recess, nor hear thy voice,
Though oft invoked; or, haply, if thy call
Rouse up the slumbering tribe, with heavy eyes,
Glazed, lifeless, dull, downward they drop their tails
Inverted; high on their bent backs erect
Their pointed bristles stare; or 'mong the tufts
Of ranker weeds, each stomach-healing plant
Curious they crop, sick, spiritless, forlorn.
These inauspicious days, on other cares
Employ thy precious hours; the improving friend
With open arms embrace, and from his lips
Glean science, season'd with good-natured wit.
But if the inclement skies and angry Jove
Forbid the pleasing intercourse, thy books
Invite thy ready hand, each sacred page

Rich with the wise remarks of heroes old.
Converse familiar with the illustrious dead;
With great examples of old Greece or Rome
Enlarge thy free-born heart; and bless kind Heaven,
That Britain yet enjoys dear liberty,
That balm of life, that sweetest blessing; cheap,
Though purchased with our blood. Well bred, polite,
Credit thy calling. See! how mean, how low,
The bookless, sauntring youth, proud of the skut
That dignifies his cap, his flourish'd belt,
And rusty couples gingling by his side.
Be thou of other mould; and know, that such
Transporting pleasures, were by Heaven ordain'd
Wisdom's relief, and Virtue's great reward.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

BOOK
II

Argument.

Of the power of instinct in brutes. Two remarkable instances in the hunting of the roebuck, and in the hare going to seat in the morning. Of the variety of seats or forms of the hare, according to the change of the season, weather, or wind. Description of the hare-hunting in all its parts, interspersed with rules to be observed by those who follow that chase. Transition to the Asiatick way of hunting, particularly the magnificent manner of the Great Mogul, and other Tartarian princes, taken from Monsieur Bernier, and the History of Gengis Cawn the Great. Concludes with a short reproof of tyrants and oppressors of mankind.

Nor will it less delight the attentive sage,
To observe that instinct, which, unerring, guides
The brutal race, which mimicks reason's lore,
And oft transcends. Heaven-taught, the roebuck swift
Loiters at ease before the driving pack,
And mocks their vain pursuit; nor far he flies,
But checks his ardour, till the steaming scent,
That freshens on the blade, provokes their rage.
Urged to their speed, his weak deluded foes,
Soon flag fatigued; strain'd to excess each nerve,
Each slacken'd sinew fails; they pant, they foam:
Then o'er the lawn he bounds, o'er the high hills
Stretches secure, and leaves the scatter'd crowd,
To puzzle in the distant vale below.

'Tis instinct that directs the jealous hare
To choose her soft abode: with step reversed,
She forms the doubling maze; then, ere the morn
Peeps through the clouds, leaps to her close recess.
As wandering shepherds, on the Arabian plains,
No settled residence observe, but shift
Their moving camp; now, on some cooler hill,
With cedars crown'd, court the refreshing breeze;
And then, below, where trickling streams distil
From some penurious source, their thirst allay,
And feed their fainting flocks. So the wise hares
Oft quit their seats, lest some more curious eye
Should mark their haunts, and by dark treacherous wiles
Plot their destruction; or, perchance, in hopes
Of plenteous forage, near the ranker mead,
Or matted blade, wary and close they sit.
When spring shines forth, season of love and joy,
In the moist marsh, 'mong beds of rushes hid,
They cool their boiling blood: when summer suns
Bake the cleft earth, to thick wide-waving fields
Of corn full grown, they lead their helpless young:
But when autumnal torrents, and fierce rains
Deluge the vale, in the dry crumbling bank
Their forms they delve, and cautiously avoid

The dripping covert; yet when winter's cold
Their limbs benumbs, thither, with speed return'd,
In the long grass they skulk, or, shrinking, creep
Among the wither'd leaves: thus changing still,
As fancy prompts them, or as food invites.
But every season carefully observed,
The inconstant winds, the fickle element,
The wise experienced huntsman soon may find
His subtle, various game; nor waste in vain
His tedious hours, till his impatient hounds,
With disappointment vex'd, each springing lark
Babbling pursue, far scatter'd o'er the fields.
Now golden autumn from her open lap
Her fragrant bounties showers; the fields are shorn;
Inwardly smiling, the proud farmer views
The rising pyramids that grace his yard,
And counts his large increase; his barns are stored,
And groaning staddles bend beneath their load.
All now is free as air, and the gay pack
In the rough bristly stubbles range, unblamed;
No widow's tears o'erflow, no secret curse
Swells in the farmer's breast, which his pale lips
Trembling conceal, by his fierce landlord awed:
But courteous now, he levels every fence,
Joins in the common cry, and halloos loud,

Charm'd with the rattling thunder of the field.
Oh bear me, some kind power invisible,
To that extended lawn, where the gay court
View the swift racers, stretching to the goal!
Games more renown'd, and a far nobler train,
Than proud Elean fields could boast of old.
Oh! were a Theban lyre not wanting here,
And Pindar's voice, to do their merit right!
Or to those spacious plains, where the strain'd eye,
In the wide prospect lost, beholds at last
Sarum's proud spire, that o'er the hills ascends,
And pierces through the clouds. Or to thy downs,
Fair Cotswold, where the well-breathed beagle climbs,
With matchless speed, thy green aspiring brow,
And leaves the lagging multitude behind.

Hail, gentle dawn! mild blushing goddess, hail!
Rejoiced, I see thy purple mantle spread
O'er half the skies, gems pave thy radiant way,
And orient pearls from every shrub depend.
Farewell, Cleora; here deep sunk in down,
Slumber secure, with happy dreams amused,
Till grateful steams shall tempt thee to receive
Thy early meal, or thy officious maids,
The toilet placed, shall urge thee to perform
The important work. Me other joys invite,

The horn sonorous calls, the pack awaked,
Their matins chant, nor brook my long delay.
My courser hears their voice; see there, with ears
And tail erect, neighing, he paws the ground;
Fierce rapture kindles in his reddening eyes,
And boils in every vein. As captive boys,
Cow'd by the ruling rod, and haughty frowns
Of pedagogues severe, from their hard tasks
If once dismiss'd, no limits can contain
The tumult raised within their little breasts,
But give a loose to all their frolick play:
So from their kennel rush the joyous pack;
A thousand wanton gaieties express
Their inward ecstasy, their pleasing sport
Once more indulged, and liberty restored.
The rising sun, that o'er the horizon peeps,
As many colours from their glossy skins
Beaming reflects, as paint the various bow,
When April showers descend. Delightful scene!
Where all around is gay, men, horses, dogs;
And in each smiling countenance appears
Fresh blooming health, and universal joy.
Huntsman, lead on! Behind, the clustering pack
Submiss attend, hear with respect thy whip
Loud-clanging, and thy harsher voice obey:

Spare not the straggling cur, that wildly roves,
But let thy brisk assistant, on his back,
Imprint thy just resentments; let each lash
Bite to the quick, till, howling, he return,
And, whining, creep amid the trembling crowd.
Here, on this verdant spot, where nature kind,
With double blessings crowns the farmer's hopes;
Where flowers autumnal spring, and the rank mead
Affords the wandering hares a rich repast,
Throw off thy ready pack. See, where they spread
And range around, and dash the glittering dew.
If some stanch hound, with his authentick voice,
Avow the recent trail, the justling tribe
Attend his call; then with one mutual cry
The welcome news confirm, and echoing hills
Repeat the pleasing tale. See, how they thread
The brakes, and up yon furrow drive along:
But quick they back recoil, and wisely check
Their eager haste; then, o'er the fallow'd ground
How leisurely they work, and many a pause
The harmonious concert breaks; till more assured,
With joys redoubled the low vallies ring.
What artful labyrinths perplex their way!
Ah, there she lies! how close! she pants, she doubts
If now she lives; she trembles as she sits,

With horror seized! The wither'd grass, that clings
Around her head, of the same russet hue,
Almost deceived my sight, had not her eyes,
With life full beaming, her vain wiles betray'd.
At distance draw thy pack, let all be hush'd,
No clamour loud, no frantick joy be heard,
Lest the wild hound run gadding o'er the plain,
Untractable, nor hear thy chiding voice.
Now gently put her off; see how direct
To her known meuse she flies! Here, huntsman, bring,
But without hurry, all thy jolly hounds,
And calmly lay them in. How low they stoop,
And seem to plough the ground! then, all at once,
With greedy nostrils, snuff the fuming steam,
That glads their fluttering hearts. As winds, let loose
From the dark caverns of the blustering god,
They burst away, and sweep the dewy lawn.
Hope gives them wings, while she's spurr'd on by fear.
The welkin rings; men, dogs, hills, rocks, and woods,
In the full concert join. Now, my brave youths,
Stripp'd for the chase, give all your souls to joy!
See how their coursers, than the mountain roe
More fleet, the verdant carpet skim; thick clouds
Snorting they breathe, their shining hoofs scarce print
The grass unbruised; with emulation fired,

They strain to lead the field, top the barr'd gate,
O'er the deep ditch exulting bound, and brush
The thorny-twining hedge: the riders bend
O'er their arch'd necks; with steady hands, by turns
Indulge their speed, or moderate their rage.
Where are their sorrows, disappointments, wrongs,
Vexations, sickness, cares? All, all are gone,
And with the panting winds lag far behind.
Huntsman! her gait observe; if in wide rings
She wheel her mazy way, in the same round
Persisting still, she'll foil the beaten track.
But, if she fly, and with the favouring wind
Urge her bold course, less intricate thy task;
Push on thy pack. Like some poor exiled wretch,
The frighted chase leaves her late dear abodes,
O'er plains remote she stretches far away,
Ah, never to return! for greedy death
Hovering exults, secure to seize his prey.
Hark! from yon covert, where those towering oaks
Above the humble copse aspiring rise,
What glorious triumphs burst, in every gale,
Upon our ravish'd ears! the hunters shout,
The clanging horns swell their sweet-winding notes;
The pack, wide-opening, load the trembling air
With various melody; from tree to tree

The propagated cry redoubling bounds,
And winged zephyrs waft the floating joy
Through all the regions near. Afflictive birch
No more the schoolboy dreads, his prison broke,
Scampering he flies, nor heeds his master's call;
The weary traveller forgets his road,
And climbs the adjacent hill; the ploughman leaves
The unfinish'd furrow; nor his bleating flocks
Are now the shepherd's joy; men, boys, and girls,
Desert the unpeopled village; and wild crowds
Spread o'er the plain, by the sweet frenzy seized.
Look, how she pants! and o'er yon opening glade
Slips, glancing, by; while, at the further end,
The puzzling pack unravel wile by wile,
Maze within maze. The covert's utmost bound
Slily she skirts; behind them, cautious, creeps,
And, in that very track, so lately stain'd
By all the steaming crowd, seems to pursue
The foe she flies. Let cavillers deny
That brutes have reason; sure, 'tis something more,
'Tis Heaven directs, and stratagems inspires,
Beyond the short extent of human thought.
But hold—I see her from the covert break;
Sad, on yon little eminence, she sits;
Intent she listens, with one ear erect,

Pondering, and doubtful, what new course to take,
And how to escape the fierce blood-thirsty crew,
That still urge on, and still, in vollies loud,
Insult her woes, and mock her sore distress.
As now, in louder peals, the loaded winds
Bring on the gathering storm, her fears prevail;
And o'er the plain, and o'er the mountain's ridge,
Away she flies; nor ships, with wind and tide,
And all their canvas wings, scud half so fast.
Once more, ye jovial train, your courage try,
And each clean courser's speed. We scour along,
In pleasing hurry and confusion toss'd;
Oblivion to be wish'd. The patient pack
Hang on the scent, unwearied; up they climb,
And ardent we pursue; our labouring steeds
We press, we gore; till once the summit gain'd,
Painfully panting, there we breathe awhile;
Then, like a foaming torrent, pouring down
Precipitant, we smoke along the vale.
Happy the man, who, with unrivall'd speed,
Can pass his fellows, and with pleasure view
The struggling pack; how, in the rapid course,
Alternate they preside, and, justling, push
To guide the dubious scent; how giddy youth
Oft, babbling, errs, by wiser age reproved;

How, niggard of his strength, the wise old hound
Hangs in the rear, till some important point
Rouse all his diligence, or till the chase
Sinking he finds; then to the head he springs,
With thirst of glory fired, and wins the prize.
Huntsman, take heed; they stop in full career:
Yon crowding flocks, that at a distance gaze,
Have haply foil'd the turf. See! that old hound,
How busily he works, but dares not trust
His doubtful sense; draw yet a wider ring.
Hark! now again the chorus fills: as bells
Sallied awhile, at once their peal renew,
And high in air the tuneful thunder rolls.
See, how they toss, with animated rage,
Recovering all they lost!——That eager haste
Some doubling wile foreshows.—Ah, yet once more
They're check'd!—hold back with speed—on either hand
They flourish round——even yet persist—'tis right:
Away they spring; the rustling stubbles bend
Beneath the driving storm. Now the poor chase
Begins to flag, to her last shifts reduced:
From brake to brake she flies, and visits all
Her well-known haunts, where once she ranged secure,
With love and plenty bless'd. See! there she goes;

She reels along, and, by her gait, betrays
Her inward weakness. See, how black she looks!
The sweat, that clogs the obstructed pores, scarce leaves
A languid scent. And now, in open view,
See, see! she flies; each eager hound exerts
His utmost speed, and stretches every nerve.
How quick she turns, their gaping jaws eludes,
And yet a moment lives; till round enclosed
By all the greedy pack, with infant screams
She yields her breath, and there reluctant dies!
So, when the furious Bacchanals assail'd
Threïcian Orpheus, poor ill-fated bard!
Loud was the cry; hills, woods, and Hebrus' banks,
Return'd their clamorous rage: distress'd he flies,
Shifting from place to place, but flies in vain;
For eager they pursue, till panting, faint,
By noisy multitudes o'erpower'd, he sinks,
To the relentless crowd a bleeding prey.
The huntsman now, a deep incision made,
Shakes out, with hands impure, and dashes down,
Her reeking entrails, and yet quivering heart.
These claim the pack; the bloody perquisite
For all their toils. Stretch'd on the ground she lies,
A mangled corse; in her dim glaring eyes
Cold death exults, and stiffens every limb.

Awed, by the threatening whip, the furious hounds
Around her bay; or, at their master's foot,
Each happy favourite courts his kind applause,
With humble adulation cowering low.
All now is joy. With cheeks full-blown they wind
Her solemn dirge, while the loud-opening pack
The concert swell, and hills and dales return
The sadly-pleasing sounds. Thus the poor hare,
A puny, dastard animal! but versed
In subtle wiles, diverts the youthful train.
But if thy proud aspiring soul disdains
So mean a prey, delighted with the pomp,
Magnificence, and grandeur of the chase,
Hear what the Muse from faithful records sings.
Why, on the banks of Jumnah, Indian stream,
Line within line, rise the pavilions proud,
Their silken streamers waving in the wind?
Why neighs the warrior horse? from tent to tent,
Why press in crowds the buzzing multitude?
Why shines the polish'd helm, and pointed lance,
This way and that, far-beaming o'er the plain?
Nor Visapour, nor Golconda rebel;
Nor the great Sophy, with his numerous host,
Lays waste the provinces; nor glory fires
To rob and to destroy, beneath the name

And specious guise of war. A nobler cause
Calls Aurengzebe to arms. No cities sack'd,
No mother's tears, no helpless orphan's cries,
No violated leagues, with sharp remorse,
Shall sting the conscious victor: but mankind
Shall hail him good and just: for 'tis on beasts
He draws his vengeful sword; on beasts of prey,
Full fed with human gore. See, see, he comes!
Imperial Delhi, opening wide her gates,
Pours out her thronging legions, bright in arms,
And all the pomp of war. Before them sound
Clarions and trumpets, breathing martial airs,
And bold defiance. High, upon his throne,
Borne on the back of his proud elephant,
Sits the great chief of Timur's glorious race:
Sublime he sits, amid the radiant blaze
Of gems and gold. Omrahs about him crowd,
And rein the Arabian steed, and watch his nod:
And potent Rajahs, who themselves preside
O'er realms of wide extent; but here, submiss,
Their homage pay; alternate kings and slaves.
Next these, with prying eunuchs girt around,
The fair sultanas of his court; a troop
Of chosen beauties, but, with care, conceal'd
From each intrusive eye; one look is death.

Ah! cruel Eastern law! had kings a power
But equal to their wild tyrannick will,
To rob us of the sun's all-cheering ray,
Were less severe. The vulgar close the march,
Slaves and artificers; and Delhi mourns
Her empty and depopulated streets.
Now, at the camp arrived, with stern review,
Through groves of spears, from file to file, he darts
His sharp experienced eye; their order marks,
Each in his station rang'd, exact and firm,
Till in the boundless line his sight is lost.
Not greater multitudes in arms appear'd,
On these extended plains, when Ammon's son
With mighty Porus in dread battle join'd,
The vassal world the prize. Nor was that host
More numerous of old, which the great king
Pour'd out on Greece, from all the unpeopled East;
That bridged the Hellespont from shore to shore,
And drank the rivers dry. Mean while, in troops,
The busy hunter-train mark out the ground,
A wide circumference; full many a league
In compass round; woods, rivers, hills, and plains,
Large provinces; enough to gratify
Ambition's highest aim, could reason bound
Man's erring will. Now sit, in close divan,

The mighty chiefs of this prodigious host.
He, from the throne, high-eminent presides;
Gives out his mandates proud, laws of the chase,
From ancient records drawn. With reverence low,
And prostrate at his feet, the chiefs receive
His irreversible decrees, from which
To vary, is to die. Then, his brave bands
Each to his station leads, encamping round,
Till the wide circle is completely form'd.
Where decent order reigns: what these command,
Those execute with speed, and punctual care,
In all the strictest discipline of war;
As if some watchful foe, with bold insult,
Hung lowering o'er the camp. The high resolve,
That flies on wings, through all the encircling line,
Each motion steers, and animates the whole.
So, by the sun's attractive power controll'd,
The planets in their spheres roll round his orb;
On all he shines, and rules the great machine.

Ere yet the morn dispels the fleeting mists,
The signal given, by the loud trumpet's voice,
Now high in air the imperial standard waves,
Emblazon'd rich with gold, and glittering gems;
And, like a sheet of fire, through the dun gloom
Streaming meteorous. The soldiers' shouts,

And all the brazen instruments of war,
With mutual clamour, and united din,
Fill the large concave: while, from camp to camp,
They catch the varied sounds, floating in air.
Round all the wide circumference, tigers fell
Shrink at the noise; deep in his gloomy den,
The lion starts, and morsels, yet unchew'd,
Drop from his trembling jaws. Now, all at once,
Onward they march, embattled, to the sound
Of martial harmony; fifes, cornets, drums,
That rouse the sleepy soul to arms, and bold
Heroick deeds. In parties, here and there
Detach'd, o'er hill and dale, the hunters range,
Inquisitive; strong dogs, that match in fight
The boldest brute, around their masters wait,
A faithful guard. No haunt unsearch'd, they drive
From every covert, and from every den,
The lurking savages. Incessant shouts
Re-echo through the woods, and kindling fires
Gleam from the mountain tops; the forest seems
One mingling blaze: like flocks of sheep, they fly
Before the flaming brand: fierce lions, pards,
Boars, tigers, bears, and wolves; a dreadful crew
Of grim blood-thirsty foes! growling along,
They stalk, indignant; but fierce vengeance still

Hangs pealing on their rear, and pointed spears
Present immediate death. Soon as the night,
Wrapp'd in her sable veil, forbids the chase,
They pitch their tents, in even ranks, around
The circling camp: the guards are placed; and fires,
At proper distances ascending, rise,
And paint the horizon with their ruddy light.
So, round some island's shore of large extent,
Amid the gloomy horrors of the night,
The billows, breaking on the pointed rocks,
Seem all one flame, and the bright circuit wide
Appears a bulwark of surrounding fire.
What dreadful howlings, and what hideous roar,
Disturb those peaceful shades! where erst the bird,
That glads the night, had cheer'd the listening groves
With sweet complainings. Through the silent gloom
Oft they the guards assail; as oft repell'd
They fly reluctant, with hot boiling rage
Stung to the quick, and mad with wild despair.
Thus, day by day, they still the chase renew;
At night encamp; till now, in straighter bounds,
The circle lessens, and the beasts perceive
The wall that hems them in on every side.
And now their fury bursts, and knows no mean;
From man they turn, and point their ill judged rage

Against their fellow brutes. With teeth and claws
The civil war begins; grappling they tear;
Lions on tigers prey, and bears on wolves:
Horrible discord! till the crowd behind
Shouting pursue, and part the bloody fray.
At once their wrath subsides; tame as the lamb,
The lion hangs his head; the furious pard,
Cow'd and subdued, flies from the face of man,
Nor bears one glance of his commanding eye:
So abject is a tyrant in distress.

At last, within the narrow plain confined,
A listed field, mark'd out for bloody deeds,
An amphitheatre, more glorious far
Than ancient Rome could boast, they crowd in heaps,
Dismay'd, and quite appall'd. In meet array,
Sheath'd in refulgent arms, a noble band
Advance; great lords of high imperial blood,
Early resolved to assert the royal race,
And prove, by glorious deeds, their valour's growth
Mature, ere yet the callow down has spread
Its curling shade. On bold Arabian steeds,
With decent pride they sit, that fearless hear
The lion's dreadful roar; and, down the rock,
Swift shooting, plunge; or o'er the mountain's ridge
Stretching along, the greedy tiger leave,

Panting behind. On foot their faithful slaves,
With javelins arm'd, attend; each watchful eye
Fix'd on his youthful care, for him alone
He fears; and, to redeem his life, unmoved,
Would lose his own. The mighty Aurengzebe,
From his high-elevated throne, beholds
His blooming race; revolving in his mind,
What once he was, in his gay spring of life,
When vigour strung his nerves: parental joy
Melts in his eyes, and flushes in his cheeks.

Now the loud trumpet sounds a charge: the shouts
Of eager hosts, through the circling line,
And the wild howlings of the beasts within,
Rend wide the welkin! flights of arrows, wing'd
With death, and javelins, launch'd from every arm,
Gall sore the brutal bands, with many a wound
Gored through and through. Despair at last prevails,
When fainting nature shrinks, and rouses all
Their drooping courage: swell'd with furious rage,
Their eyes dart fire; and on the youthful band
They rush implacable. They their broad shields
Quick interpose; on each devoted head
Their flaming falchions, as the bolts of Jove,
Descend unerring. Prostrate on the ground
The grinning monsters lie, and their foul gore

Defiles the verdant plain. Nor idle stand
The trusty slaves; with pointed spears, they pierce
Through their tough hides; or at their gaping mouths
An easier passage find. The king of brutes,
In broken roarings, breathes his last; the bear
Grumbles in death; nor can his spotted skin,
Though sleek it shine, with varied beauties gay,
Save the proud pard from unrelenting fate.
The battle bleeds; grim slaughter strides along,
Glutting her greedy jaws, grins o'er her prey.
Men, horses, dogs, fierce beasts of every kind,
A strange promiscuous carnage, drench'd in blood,
And heaps on heaps amass'd. What yet remain
Alive, with vain assault, contend to break
The impenetrable line: others, whom fear
Inspires with self-preserving wiles, beneath
The bodies of the slain for shelter creep;
Aghast they fly, or hide their heads, dispersed.
And now, perchance, had Heaven but pleased, the work
Of death had been complete; and Aurengzebe,
By one dread frown, extinguish'd half their race;
When lo! the bright sultanas of his court
Appear, and to his ravish'd eyes display
Those charms, but rarely to the day reveal'd.

Lowly they bend, and humbly sue, to save
The vanquish'd host. What mortal can deny,
When suppliant beauty begs? At his command,
Opening to right and left, the well-train'd troops
Leave a large void for their retreating foes.
Away they fly, on wings of fear upborne,
To seek, on distant hills, their late abodes.
Ye proud oppressors, whose vain hearts exult
In wantonness of power, 'gainst the brute race,
Fierce robbers, like yourselves, a guiltless war
Wage uncontroll'd; here quench your thirst of blood:
But learn, from Aurengzebe, to spare mankind.

BOOK
III

Argument.

Of King Edgar, and his imposing a tribute of wolves' heads upon the kings of Wales: from hence a transition to fox-hunting, which is described in all its parts. Censure of an over-numerous pack. Of the several engines to destroy foxes, and other wild beasts. The steel-trap described, and the manner of using it. Description of the pitfall for the lion; and another for the elephant. The ancient way of hunting the tiger with a mirror. The Arabian manner of hunting the wild boar. Description of the royal stag-chase at Windsor Forest. Concludes with an address to his Majesty, and an eulogy upon mercy.

In Albion's isle, when glorious Edgar reign'd,
He, wisely provident, from her white cliffs
Launch'd half her forests, and, with numerous fleets,
Cover'd his wide domain: there proudly rode,
Lord of the deep, the great prerogative
Of British monarchs. Each invader bold,
Dane and Norwegian, at a distance gazed,
And, disappointed, gnash'd his teeth in vain.
He scour'd the seas, and to remotest shores,
With swelling sails, the trembling corsair fled.
Rich commerce flourish'd; and with busy oars
Dash'd the resounding surge. Nor less, at land,
His royal cares; wise, potent, gracious prince!

His subjects from their cruel foes he saved,
And, from rapacious savages, their flocks.
Cambria's proud kings, though with reluctance, paid
Their tributary wolves; head after head,
In full account, till the woods yield no more,
And all the ravenous race, extinct, is lost.
In fertile pastures, more securely grazed
The social troops; and soon their large increase,
With curling fleeces, whiten'd all the plains.
But yet, alas! the wily fox remain'd,
A subtle, pilfering foe, prowling around
In midnight shades, and wakeful to destroy.
In the full fold, the poor defenceless lamb,
Seized by his guileful arts, with sweet warm blood,
Supplies a rich repast. The mournful ewe,
Her dearest treasure lost, through the dun night
Wanders perplex'd, and, darkling, bleats in vain:
While, in the adjacent bush, poor Philomel,
Herself a parent once, till wanton churls
Despoil'd her nest, joins in her loud laments,
With sweeter notes, and more melodious woe.
For these nocturnal thieves, huntsman, prepare
Thy sharpest vengeance. Oh! how glorious 'tis
To right the oppress'd, and bring the felon vile
To just disgrace! Ere yet the morning peep,

Or stars retire from the first blush of day,
With thy far-echoing voice alarm thy pack,
And rouse thy bold compeers. Then to the copse,
Thick with entangling grass, or prickly furze,
With silence lead thy many-colour'd hounds,
In all their beauty's pride. See! how they range
Dispersed; how busily, this way and that,
They cross, examining, with curious nose,
Each likely haunt. Hark! on the drag I hear
Their doubtful notes, preluding to a cry
More nobly full, and swell'd with every mouth.
As straggling armies, at the trumpet's voice,
Press to their standard; hither all repair,
And hurry through the woods with hasty step,
Rustling and full of hope; now, driven in heaps,
They push, they strive, while from his kennel sneaks
The conscious villain. See! he skulks along,
Sleek, at the shepherd's cost, and plump, with meals
Purloin'd: so thrive the wicked here below.
Though high his brush he bear, though, tipp'd with white,
It gaily shine, yet ere the sun, declined,
Recall the shades of night, the pamper'd rogue
Shall rue his fate, reversed; and, at his heels,

Behold the just avenger, swift to seize
His forfeit head, and thirsting for his blood.
Heavens! what melodious strains! how beat our hearts,
Big with tumultuous joy! the loaded gales
Breathe harmony; and, as the tempest drives,
From wood to wood, through every dark recess,
The forest thunders, and the mountains shake.
The chorus swells; less various, and less sweet,
The trilling notes, when, in those very groves,
The feather'd choristers salute the spring,
And every bush in concert joins: or, when
The master's hand, in modulated air,
Bids the loud organ breathe, and all the powers
Of musick, in one instrument combine
An universal minstrelsy. And now
In vain each earth he tries; the doors are barr'd,
Impregnable; nor is the covert safe;
He pants for purer air. Hark! what loud shouts
Re-echo through the groves!—he breaks away!
Shrill horns proclaim his flight. Each straggling hound
Strains o'er the lawn, to reach the distant pack.
'Tis triumph all, and joy. Now, my brave youths,
Now give a loose to the clean generous steed;

Flourish the whip, nor spare the galling spur:
But, in the madness of delight, forget
Your fears! Far o'er the rocky hills we range,
And dangerous our course; but, in the brave,
True courage never fails: in vain the stream
In foaming eddies whirls; in vain the ditch,
Wide-gaping, threatens death: the craggy steep,
Where the poor dizzy shepherd crawls with care,
And clings to every twig, gives us no pain;
But down we sweep, as stoops the falcon bold
To pounce his prey: then up the opponent hill,
By the swift motion slung, we mount aloft.
So ships, in winter seas, now sliding, sink
Adown the steepy wave, then, toss'd on high,
Ride on the billows, and defy the storm.
What lengths we pass! where will the wandering chase
Lead us, bewilder'd! smooth as swallows skim
The new-shorn mead, and far more swift, we fly.
See, my brave pack! how to the head they press,
Justling in close array; then, more diffuse,
Obliquely wheel, while, from their opening mouths,
The vollied thunder breaks. So, when the cranes
Their annual voyage steer, with wanton wing
Their figure oft they change, and their loud clang

From cloud to cloud rebounds. How far behind
The hunter-crew, wide-straggling o'er the plain!
The panting courser now, with trembling nerves,
Begins to reel; urged by the goring spur,
Makes many a faint effort: he snorts, he foams;
The big round drops run trickling down his sides,
With sweat and blood distain'd. Look back, and view
The strange confusion of the vale below,
Where sour vexation reigns: see yon poor jade;
In vain the impatient rider frets and swears,
With galling spurs harrows his mangled sides;
He can no more; his stiff unpliant limbs,
Rooted in earth, unmoved and fix'd he stands,
For every cruel curse returns a groan,
And sobs, and faints, and dies! who, without grief,
Can view that pamper'd steed, his master's joy,
His minion, and his daily care, well clothed,
Well fed with every nicer cate; no cost,
No labour, spared; who, when the flying chase
Broke from the copse, without a rival led
The numerous train; now, a sad spectacle
Of pride brought low, and humbled insolence,
Drove like a pannier'd ass, and scourged along!
While these, with loosen'd reins and dangling heels,

Hang on their reeling palfreys, that scarce bear
Their weights; another, in the treacherous bog,
Lies floundering, half ingulf'd. What biting thoughts
Torment the abandon'd crew! Old age laments
His vigour spent: the tall, plump, brawny youth,
Curses his cumbrous bulk; and envies, now,
The short pygmean race, he whilom kenn'd,
With proud insulting leer. A chosen few,
Alone, the sport enjoy, nor droop beneath
Their pleasing toils. Here, huntsman! from this highth
Observe yon birds of prey; if I can judge,
'Tis there the villain lurks: they hover round,
And claim him as their own. Was I not right?
See! there he creeps along; his brush he drags,
And sweeps the mire impure: from his wide jaws
His tongue unmoisten'd hangs; symptoms too sure
Of sudden death. Ha! yet he flies, nor yields
To black despair: but one loose more, and all
His wiles are vain. Hark, through yon village now
The rattling clamour rings. The barns, the cots,
And leafless elms, return the joyous sounds.
Through every homestall, and through every yard,
His midnight walks, panting, forlorn, he flies;

Through every hole he sneaks, through every jakes,
Plunging, he wades, besmear'd; and fondly hopes
In a superiour stench to lose his own:
But, faithful to the track, the unerring hounds,
With peals of echoing vengeance, close pursue.
And now, distress'd, no sheltering covert near,
Into the hen-roost creeps, whose walls, with gore
Distain'd, attest his guilt. There, villain! there
Expect thy fate deserved. And soon from thence
The pack, inquisitive, with clamour loud,
Drag out their trembling prize, and, on his blood,
With greedy transport feast. In bolder notes
Each sounding horn proclaims the felon dead;
And all the assembled village shouts for joy.
The farmer, who beholds his mortal foe
Stretch'd at his feet, applauds the glorious deed,
And, grateful, calls us to a short repast:
In the full glass the liquid amber smiles,
Our native product; and his good old mate,
With choicest viands, heaps the liberal board,
To crown our triumphs, and reward our toils.

Here must the instructive Muse, but with respect,
Censure that numerous pack, that crowd of state,
With which the vain profusion of the great
Covers the lawn, and shakes the trembling copse.

Pompous incumbrance! a magnificence
Useless, vexatious! for the wily fox,
Safe in the increasing number of his foes,
Kens well the great advantage: slinks behind,
And slyly creeps through the same beaten track,
And hunts them step by step; then views, escaped,
With inward ecstasy, the panting throng
In their own footsteps puzzled, foil'd, and lost.
So, when proud Eastern kings summon to arms
Their gaudy legions, from far distant climes
They flock in crowds, unpeopling half a world;
But when the day of battle calls them forth,
To charge the well-train'd foe, a band compact
Of chosen veterans, they press blindly on,
In heaps confused, by their own weapons fall,
A smoking carnage scatter'd o'er the plain.
  Nor hounds alone this noxious brood destroy:
The plunder'd warrener full many a wile
Devises, to entrap his greedy foe,
Fat with nocturnal spoils. At close of day,
He silent drags his trail; then from the ground
Pares thin the close-grazed turf; there, with nice hand,
Covers the latent death, with curious springs
Prepared to fly at once, whene'er the tread

Of man or beast, unwarily shall press
The yielding surface: by the indented steel
With gripe tenacious held, the felon grins,
And struggles, but in vain: yet oft, 'tis known,
When every art has fail'd, the captive fox
Has shared the wounded joint, and, with a limb,
Compounded for his life. But if, perchance,
In the deep pitfall plunged, there's no escape;
But unreprieved he dies, and, bleach'd in air,
The jest of clowns, his reeking carcase hangs.
Of these are various kinds; not even the king
Of brutes evades this deep devouring grave;
But, by the wily African betray'd,
Heedless of fate, within its gaping jaws
Expires, indignant. When the orient beam
With blushes paints the dawn, and all the race
Carnivorous, with blood full-gorged, retire
Into their darksome cells, there, satiate, snore
O'er dripping offals, and the mangled limbs
Of men and beasts, the painful forester
Climbs the high hills, whose proud aspiring tops,
With the tall cedar crown'd, and taper fir,
Assail the clouds; there, 'mong the craggy rocks,
And thickets intricate, trembling, he views
His footsteps in the sand, the dismal road

And avenue to death. Hither he calls
His watchful bands, and, low into the ground,
A pit they sink, full many a fathom deep:
Then, in the midst, a column high is rear'd,
The butt of some fair tree; upon whose top
A lamb is placed, just ravish'd from his dam;
And next, a wall they build, with stones and earth
Encircling round, and hiding from all view
The dreadful precipice. Now, when the shades
Of night hang lowering o'er the mountain's brow,
And hunger keen, and pungent thirst of blood,
Rouze up the slothful beast, he shakes his sides,
Slow-rising from his lair, and stretches wide
His ravenous paws, with recent gore distain'd;
The forests tremble as he roars aloud,
Impatient to destroy. O'erjoy'd, he hears
The bleating innocent, that claims, in vain,
The shepherd's care, and seeks, with piteous moan,
The foodful teat; himself, alas! design'd
Another's meal. For now the greedy brute
Winds him from far; and, leaping o'er the mound,
To seize his trembling prey, headlong is plunged
Into the deep abyss. Prostrate he lies,
Astunn'd, and impotent. Ah! what avail
Thine eye-balls flashing fire, thy length of tail

That lashes thy broad sides, thy jaws besmear'd
With blood, and offals crude, thy shaggy mane,
The terrour of the woods, thy stately port,
And bulk enormous, since, by stratagem,
Thy strength is foil'd? Unequal is the strife,
When sovereign reason combats brutal rage.
  On distant Ethiopia's sun-burnt coasts,
The black inhabitants a pitfall frame,
But of a different kind, and different use:
With slender poles the wide capacious mouth,
And hurdles slight, they close; o'er these is spread
A floor of verdant turf, with all its flowers
Smiling delusive, and from strictest search
Concealing the deep grave that yawns below:
Then boughs of trees they cut, with tempting fruit,
Of various kinds, surcharged; the downy peach,
The clustering vine, and, of bright golden rind,
The fragrant orange. Soon as evening gray
Advances slow, besprinkling all around,
With kind refreshing dews, the thirsty glebe,
The stately elephant, from the close shade,
With step majestic, strides, eager to taste
The cooler breeze, that from the sea-beat shore
Delightful breathes, or, in the limpid stream,
To lave his panting sides; joyous he scents

The rich repast, unweeting of the death
That lurks within. And soon he, sporting, breaks
The brittle boughs, and greedily devours
The fruit delicious: ah! too dearly bought;
The price is life: for now the treacherous turf,
Trembling, gives way; and the unwieldy beast,
Self-sinking, drops into the dark profound.
So when dilated vapours, struggling, heave
The incumbent earth, if, chance, the cavern'd ground,
Shrinking, subside, and the thin surface yield,
Down sinks, at once, the ponderous dome, ingulf'd,
With all its towers. Subtle, delusive man,
How various are thy wiles! artful to kill
Thy savage foes, a dull unthinking race.
Fierce, from his lair, springs forth the speckled pard,
Thirsting for blood, and eager to destroy;
The huntsman flies, but to his flight alone
Confides not: at convenient distance fix'd,
A polish'd mirror stops, in full career,
The furious brute: he there his image views;
Spots against spots, with rage improving, glow;
Another pard his bristly whiskers curls,
Grins as he grins, fierce-menacing, and wide
Distends his opening paws; himself against
Himself opposed, and with dread vengeance arm'd.

The huntsman, now secure, with fatal aim
Directs the pointed spear, by which transfix'd,
He dies; and with him dies the rival shade.
Thus man innumerous engines forms, to assail
The savage kind; but most, the docile horse,
Swift, and confederate with man, annoys
His brethren of the plains; without whose aid
The hunter's arts were vain, unskill'd to wage,
With the more active brutes, an equal war;
But borne by him, without the well-train'd pack,
Man dares his foe, on wings of wind secure.
Him the fierce Arab mounts, and, with his troop
Of bold compeers, ranges the desert wild,
Where, by the magnet's aid, the traveller
Steers his untrodden course; yet oft, on land,
Is wreck'd, in the high-rolling waves of sand
Immersed, and lost; while these intrepid bands,
Safe in their horses' speed, out-fly the storm,
And scouring round, make men and beasts their prey.
The grisly boar is singled from his herd,
As large as that in Erimanthian woods,
A match for Hercules: round him they fly,
In circles wide; and each, in passing, sends
His feather'd death into his brawny sides.
But perilous the attempt; for, if the steed

Haply too near approach, or the loose earth
His footing fail, the watchful angry beast
The advantage spies, and, at one sidelong glance,
Rips up his groin. Wounded, he rears aloft,
And, plunging, from his back the rider hurls
Precipitant; then, bleeding, spurns the ground,
And drags his reeking entrails o'er the plain.
Meanwhile the surly monster trots along,
But with unequal speed; for still they wound,
Swift wheeling in the spacious ring: a wood
Of darts upon his back he bears; adown
His tortured sides the crimson torrents roll,
From many a gaping font; and now at last,
Staggering, he falls, in blood and foam expires.
But whither roves my devious Muse, intent
On antique tales, while yet the royal stag
Unsung remains? Tread, with respectful awe,
Windsor's green glades, where Denham, tuneful bard,
Charm'd once the listening Dryads with his song,
Sublimely sweet. O grant me, sacred shade,
To glean, submiss, what thy full sickle leaves!
The morning sun, that gilds, with trembling rays,
Windsor's high towers, beholds the courtly train
Mount for the chase; nor views in all his course
A scene so gay: heroick, noble youths,

In arts and arms renown'd, and lovely nymphs,
The fairest of this isle, where beauty dwells,
Delighted, and deserts her Paphian grove,
For our more favour'd shades; in proud parade
These shine magnificent, and press around
The royal happy pair. Great in themselves,
They smile superiour; of external show
Regardless, while their inbred virtues give
A lustre to their power, and grace their court
With real splendours, far above the pomp
Of Eastern kings, in all their tinsel pride.
Like troops of Amazons, the female band
Prance round their cars; not in refulgent arms,
As those of old; unskill'd to wield the sword,
Or bend the bow, these kill with surer aim.
The royal offspring, fairest of the fair,
Lead on the splendid train. Anna, more bright
Than summer suns, or as the lightning keen,
With irresistible effulgence arm'd,
Fires every heart: he must be more than man
Who, unconcern'd, can bear the piercing ray.
Amelia, milder than the blushing dawn,
With sweet engaging air, but equal power,
Insensibly subdues, and in soft chains
Her willing captives leads. Illustrious maids!

Ever triumphant! whose victorious charms,
Without the needless aid of high descent,
Had awed mankind, and taught the world's great lords
To bow, and sue for grace. But who is he,
Fresh as a rose-bud newly blown, and fair
As opening lilies, on whom every eye
With joy and admiration dwells? See, see!
He reins his docile barb with manly grace.
Is it Adonis, for the chase array'd?
Or Britain's second hope? Hail, blooming youth!
May all your virtues, with your years, improve,
Till, in consummate worth, you shine the pride
Of these our days, and, to succeeding times,
A bright example. As his guard of mutes
On the great sultan wait, with eyes deject,
And fix'd on earth, no voice, no sound, is heard
Within the wide serail, but all is hush'd,
And awful silence reigns; thus stand the pack,
Mute, and unmoved, and cowering low to earth,
While pass the glittering court, and royal pair:
So disciplined those hounds, and so reserved,
Whose honour 'tis to glad the hearts of kings:
But soon the winding horn, and huntsman's voice,
Let loose the general chorus; far around
Joy spreads its wings, and the gay morning smiles.

[illegible] now the royal stag invades
His wonted lair: he shakes his dappled sides,
And tosses high his stately head: the copse
Beneath his antlers bends. What doubling shifts
He tries! but not more the wily hare: in these
Whilst still persists, but not the full-mouth'd pack,
With deadly music, thunder in his rear.
The woods reply, the hunter's cheering shouts
Break through the glades, and the wide forest rings.
How merrily they chase! their mouths deep
Inhale the grateful steam. Such is the cry,
And such the harmonious din, the soldier deems
The battle kindling, and the statesman grave
Forgets his weighty cares; each age, each sex,
In the wild transport joins; luxuriant joy,
And pleasure in excess, sparkling, exult
On every brow, and revel unrestrain'd.
How happy art thou, man! when thou'rt no more
Thyself; when all the pangs, that grind thy soul,
In rapture, and in sweet oblivion lost,
Yield a short interval, and ease from pain!

See, the swift courser strains, his shining hoofs
Securely beat the solid ground. Who now
The dangerous pitfall fears, with tangling heath
High-overgrown? or who the quivering bog,

Soft yielding to the step? All now is plain,
Plain as the strand, sea-laved, that stretches far
Beneath the rocky shore. Glades crossing glades,
The forest opens to our wondering view:
Such was the king's command. Let tyrants fierce
Lay waste the world; his the more glorious part,
To check their pride; and when the brazen voice
Of war is hush'd, as erst victorious Rome,
To employ his station'd legions in the works
Of peace; to smooth the rugged wilderness,
To drain the stagnate fen, to raise the slope
Depending road, and to make gay the face
Of nature with the embellishments of art.
How melts my beating heart! as I behold
Each lovely nymph, our island's boast and pride,
Push on the generous steed, that strokes along
O'er rough, o'er smooth; nor heeds the steepy hill,
Nor falters in the extended vale below;
Their garments loosely waving in the wind,
And all the flush of beauty in their cheeks:
While at their sides their pensive lovers wait,
Direct their dubious course; now chill'd with fear,
Solicitous, and now with love inflamed.
O grant, indulgent Heaven, no rising storm
May darken, with black wings, this glorious scene!

Should some malignant power thus damp our joys,
Vain were the gloomy cave, such as, of old,
Betray'd to lawless love the Tyrian queen:
For Britain's virtuous nymphs are chaste, as fair;
Spotless, unblamed, with equal triumph reign
In the dun gloom, as in the blaze of day.
Now the blown stag through woods, bogs, roads, and streams,
Has measured half the forest; but, alas!
He flies in vain; he flies not from his fears.
Though far he cast the lingering pack behind,
His haggard fancy still, with horror, views
The fell destroyer; still the fatal cry
Insults his ears, and wounds his trembling heart.
So the poor fury-haunted wretch, his hands
In guiltless blood distain'd, still seems to hear
The dying shrieks; and the pale threatening ghost
Moves as he moves, and, as he flies, pursues.
See here, his slot; up yon green hill he climbs,
Pants on its brow awhile; sadly looks back
On his pursuers, covering all the plain;
But, wrung with anguish, bears not long the sight,
Shoots down the steep, and sweats along the vale;
There mingles with the herd, where once he reign'd
Proud monarch of the groves; whose clashing beam

His rivals awed, and whose exalted power
Was still rewarded with successful love.
But the base herd have learn'd the ways of men;
Averse they fly, or, with rebellious aim,
Chase him from thence: needless their impious deed,
The huntsman knows him by a thousand marks,
Black, and imboss'd; nor are his hounds deceived;
Too well distinguish these, and never leave
Their once devoted foe: familiar grows
His scent, and strong their appetite to kill.
Again he flies, and, with redoubled speed,
Skims o'er the lawn; still the tenacious crew
Hang on the track, aloud demand their prey,
And push him many a league. If haply then
Too far escaped, and the gay courtly train
Behind are cast, the huntsman's clanging whip
Stops full their bold career: passive they stand,
Unmoved, an humble, an obsequious crowd,
As if, by stern Medusa, gazed to stones.
So, at their general's voice, whole armies halt,
In full pursuit, and check their thirst of blood.
Soon, at the king's command, like hasty streams
Damm'd up a while, they foam, and pour along
With fresh recruited might. The stag, who hoped
His foes were lost, now once more hears, astunn'd,

The dreadful din: he shivers every limb;
He starts, he bounds; each bush presents a foe.
Press'd by the fresh relay, no pause allow'd,
Breathless and faint, he falters in his pace,
And lifts his weary limbs with pain, that scarce
Sustain their load: he pants, he sobs, appall'd;
Drops down his heavy head to earth, beneath
His cumbrous beams oppress'd. But if, perchance,
Some prying eye surprise him, soon he rears
Erect his towering front, bounds o'er the lawn,
With ill-dissembled vigour, to amuse
The knowing forester; who inly smiles
At his weak shifts, and unavailing frauds.
So midnight tapers waste their last remains,
Shine forth a while, and, as they blaze, expire.
From wood to wood redoubling thunders roll,
And bellow through the vales; the moving storm
Thickens amain, and loud triumphant shouts,
And horns, still warbling in each glade, prelude
To his approaching fate. And now, in view,
With hobbling gait, and high, exerts, amazed,
What strength is left: to the last dregs of life
Reduced, his spirits fail, on every side
Hemm'd in, besieged; not the least opening left
To gleaming hope, the unhappy's last reserve.

Where shall he turn? or whither fly? Despair
Gives courage to the weak. Resolved to die,
He fears no more, but rushes on his foes,
And deals his deaths around; beneath his feet
These grovelling lie, those, by his antlers gored,
Defile the ensanguined plain. Ah! see, distress'd,
He stands at bay against yon knotty trunk,
That covers well his rear, his front presents
An host of foes. O shun, ye noble train,
The rude encounter, and believe your lives
Your country's due alone. As now aloof
They wing around, he finds his soul upraised,
To dare some great exploit; he charges home
Upon the broken pack, that, on each side,
Fly diverse; then, as o'er the turf he strains,
He vents the cooling stream, and, up the breeze,
Urges his course with eager violence:
Then takes the soil, and plunges in the flood
Precipitant; down the mid-stream he wafts
Along, till, like a ship distress'd, that runs
Into some winding creek, close to the verge
Of a small island, for his weary feet
Sure anchorage he finds, there skulks, immersed:
His nose, alone above the wave, draws in
The vital air; all else beneath the flood

Conceal'd, and lost, deceives each prying eye
Of man or brute. In vain the crowding pack
Draw on the margin of the stream, or cut
The liquid wave with oary feet, that move
In equal time. The gliding waters leave
No trace behind, and his contracted pores
But sparingly perspire: the huntsman strains
His labouring lungs, and puffs his cheeks in vain.
At length a blood-hound, bold, studious to kill,
And exquisite of sense, winds him from far;
Headlong he leaps into the flood, his mouth
Loud-opening, spends amain, and his wide throat
Swells every note with joy; then fearless dives
Beneath the wave, hangs on his haunch, and wounds
The unhappy brute, that flounders in the stream,
Sorely distress'd, and, struggling, strives to mount
The steepy shore. Haply once more escaped;
Again he stands at bay, amid the groves
Of willows, bending low their downy heads.
Outrageous transport fires the greedy pack;
These swim the deep, and those crawl up with pain
The slippery bank, while others on firm land
Engage; the stag repels each bold assault,
Maintains his post, and wounds for wounds returns.
As when some wily corsair boards a ship

Full-freighted, or from Africk's golden coasts,
Or India's wealthy strand, his bloody crew
Upon her deck he slings; these in the deep
Drop short, and swim to reach her steepy sides,
And, clinging, climb aloft; while those, on board,
Urge on the work of fate; the master bold,
Press'd to his last retreat, bravely resolves
To sink his wealth beneath the whelming wave,
His wealth, his foes, nor unrevenged to die.
So fares it with the stag; so he resolves
To plunge at once into the flood below,
Himself, his foes, in one deep gulf immersed.
Ere yet he executes this dire intent,
In wild disorder once more views the light;
Beneath a weight of woe he groans distress'd:
The tears run trickling down his hairy cheeks;
He weeps, nor weeps in vain. The king beholds
His wretched plight, and tenderness innate
Moves his great soul. Soon, at his high command,
Rebuked, the disappointed, hungry pack
Retire, submiss, and grumbling quit their prey.
Great prince! from thee, what may thy subjects hope;
So kind, and so beneficent to brutes?
O mercy, heavenly born! sweet attribute!

Thou great, thou best prerogative of power!
Justice may guard the throne, but, join'd with thee,
On rocks of adamant it stands secure,
And braves the storm beneath; soon as thy smiles
Gild the rough deep, the foaming waves subside,
And all the noisy tumult sinks in peace.

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BOOK
IV

Argument.

Of the necessity of destroying some beasts, and preserving others, for the use of man. Of breeding of hounds; the season for this business. The choice of the dog, of great moment. Of the litter of whelps. Of the number to be reared. Of setting them out to their several walks. Care to be taken to prevent their hunting too soon. Of entering the whelps. Of breaking them from running at sheep. Of the diseases of hounds. Of their age. Of madness; two sorts of it described, the dumb, and outrageous madness: its dreadful effects. Burning of the wound recommended, as preventing all ill consequences. The infectious hounds to be separated, and fed apart. The vanity of trusting to the many infallible cures for this malady. The dismal effects of the biting of a mad dog, upon man, described. Description of the otter-hunting. The conclusion.

WHATE'ER of earth is form'd, to earth returns,
Dissolved: the various objects we behold,
Plants, animals, this whole material mass,
Are ever changing, ever new: the soul
Of man alone, that particle divine,
Escapes the wreck of worlds, when all things fail.
Hence great the distance 'twixt the beasts that perish,
And God's bright image, man's immortal race.
The brute creation are his property,
Subservient to his will, and for him made.
As hurtful, these he kills; as useful, those
Preserves; their sole and arbitrary king.
Should he not kill, as erst the Samian sage

Taught, unadvised, and Indian Brachmans now
As vainly preach, the teeming ravenous brutes
Might fill the scanty space of this terrene,
Incumbering all the globe. Should not his care
Improve his growing stock, their kinds might fail:
Man might once more on roots and acorns feed;
And through the deserts range, shivering, forlorn,
Quite destitute of every solace dear,
And every smiling gayety of life.

The prudent huntsman, therefore, will supply
With annual large recruits, his broken pack,
And propagate their kind. As from the root
Fresh scions still spring forth, and daily yield
New blooming honours to the parent tree.
Far shall his pack be famed, far sought his breed;
And princes, at their tables, feast those hounds
His hand presents, an acceptable boon.

Ere yet the sun through the bright ram has urged
His steepy course, or mother earth unbound
Her frozen bosom to the western gale;
When feather'd troops, their social leagues dissolved,
Select their mates, and on the leafless elm
The noisy rook builds high her wicker nest;
Mark well the wanton females of thy pack,

That curl their taper tails, and, frisking, court
Their piebald mates enamour'd: their red eyes
Flash fires impure; nor rest, nor food, they take,
Goaded by furious love. In separate cells
Confine them now, lest bloody civil wars
Annoy thy peaceful state. If left at large,
The growling rivals in dread battle join,
And rude encounter. On Scamander's streams,
Heroes of old with far less fury fought,
For the bright Spartan dame, their valour's prize.
Mangled and torn, thy favourite hounds shall lie,
Stretch'd on the ground; thy kennel shall appear
A field of blood: like some unhappy town,
In civil broils confused, while discord shakes
Her bloody scourge aloft, fierce parties rage,
Staining their impious hands in mutual death.
And still the best beloved, and bravest fall:
Such are the dire effects of lawless love.

Huntsman! these ills, by timely prudent care,
Prevent: for every longing dame select
Some happy paramour; to him, alone,
In leagues connubial join. Consider well
His lineage; what his fathers did of old,
Chiefs of the pack, and first to climb the rock,
Or plunge into the deep, or thread the brake,

With thorns sharp-pointed, plash'd, and briers inwoven.
Observe with care, his shape, sort, colour, size.
Nor will sagacious huntsmen less regard
His inward habits: the vain babbler shun,
Ever loquacious, ever in the wrong.
His foolish offspring shall offend thy ears
With false alarms, and loud impertinence.
Nor less the shifting cur avoid, that breaks
Illusive from the pack; to the next hedge
Devious he strays; there, every meuse he tries;
If haply then he cross the steaming scent,
Away he flies, vain-glorious; and exults,
As of the pack supreme, and in his speed
And strength unrivall'd. Lo! cast far behind,
His vex'd associates pant, and, labouring, strain
To climb the steep ascent. Soon as they reach
The insulting boaster, his false courage fails,
Behind he lags, doom'd to the fatal noose;
His master's hate, and scorn of all the field.
What can from such be hoped, but a base brood
Of coward curs, a frantick, vagrant race?
When now the third revolving moon appears,
With sharpen'd horns, above the horizon's brink,
Without Lucina's aid, expect thy hopes

Are amply crown'd: short pangs produce to light
The smoking litter; crawling, helpless, blind,
Nature their guide, they seek the pouting teat,
That plenteous streams. Soon as the tender dam
Has form'd them with her tongue, with pleasure view
The marks of their renown'd progenitors;
Sure pledge of triumphs yet to come. All these
Select with joy; but to the merciless flood
Expose the dwindling refuse, nor o'erload
The indulgent mother. If thy heart relent,
Unwilling to destroy, a nurse provide,
And to the foster-parent give the care
Of thy superfluous brood: she'll cherish kind
The alien offspring; pleased, thou shalt behold
Her tenderness, and hospitable love.
If frolick now, and playful, they desert
Their gloomy cell, and on the verdant turf,
With nerves improved, pursue the mimick chase,
Coursing around; unto thy choicest friends
Commit thy valued prize. The rustick dames
Shall at thy kennel wait, and in their laps
Receive thy growing hopes; with many a kiss
Caress, and dignify their little charge
With some great title, and resounding name

Of high import. But, cautious, here observe
To check their youthful ardour, nor permit
The unexperienced younker, immature,
Alone to range the woods, or haunt the brakes,
Where dodging conies sport: his nerves unstrung,
And strength unequal, the laborious chase
Shall stint his growth, and his rash forward youth
Contract such vicious habits, as thy care,
And late correction, never shall reclaim.
When to full strength arrived, mature and bold,
Conduct them to the field; not all at once,
But as thy cooler prudence shall direct,
Select a few, and form them, by degrees,
To stricter discipline. With these, consort
The stanch and steady sages of the pack,
By long experience versed in all the wiles,
And subtle doublings, of the various chase.
Easy the lesson of the youthful train,
When instinct prompts, and when example guides.
If the too forward younker, at the head,
Press boldly on, in wanton sportive mood,
Correct his haste, and let him feel, abash'd,
The ruling whip. But if he stoop behind,
In wary modest guise, to his own nose
Confiding sure, give him full scope to work

His winding way, and with thy voice applaud
His patience and his care; soon shalt thou view
The hopeful pupil leader of his tribe,
And all the listening pack attend his call.
Oft lead them forth where wanton lambkins play,
And bleating dams, with jealous eyes, observe
Their tender care. If at the crowding flock
He bay presumptuous, or with eager haste
Pursue them, scatter'd o'er the verdant plain,
In the foul fact attach'd, to the strong ram
Tie fast the rash offender. See! at first,
His horn'd companion, fearful and amazed,
Shall drag him, trembling, o'er the rugged ground;
Then with his load fatigued, shall turn a-head,
And, with his curl'd hard front, incessant peal
The panting wretch; till, breathless and astunn'd,
Stretch'd on the turf he lie. Then spare not thou
The twining whip, but ply his bleeding sides,
Lash after lash; and with thy threatening voice,
Harsh echoing from the hills, inculcate loud
His vile offence. Sooner shall trembling doves,
Escaped the hawk's sharp talons, in mid air,
Assail their dangerous foe, than he once more
Disturb the peaceful flocks. In tender age,
Thus youth is train'd; as curious artists bend

The taper pliant twig, or potters form
Their soft and ductile clay to various shapes.
Nor is't enough to breed, but to preserve
Must be the huntsman's care. The stanch old hounds,
Guides of thy pack, though but in number few,
Are yet of great account; shall oft untie
The Gordian knot, when reason at a stand,
Puzzling, is lost, and all thy art is vain.
O'er clogging fallows, o'er dry plaster'd roads,
O'er floated meads, o'er plains with flocks distain'd,
Rank scenting, these must lead the dubious way.
As party chiefs, in senates who preside,
With pleaded reason, and with well-turn'd speech,
Conduct the staring multitude; so these
Direct the pack, who with joint cry approve,
And loudly boast discoveries not their own.
Unnumber'd accidents, and various ills,
Attend thy pack, hang hovering o'er their heads,
And point the way that leads to death's dark cave.
Short is their span; few at the date arrive
Of ancient Argus, in old Homer's song
So highly honour'd: kind, sagacious brute!
Not even Minerva's wisdom could conceal
Thy much-loved master, from thy nicer sense.

Dying, his lord he own'd; view'd him all o'er
With eager eyes, then closed those eyes, well pleased.
Of lesser ills the Muse declines to sing,
Nor stoops so low; of these, each groom can tell
The proper remedy. But oh! what care,
What prudence, can prevent madness, the worst
Of maladies? Terrifick pest! that blasts
The huntsman's hopes, and desolation spreads
Through all the unpeopled kennel, unrestrain'd;
More fatal than the envenom'd viper's bite,
Or that Apulian spider's poisonous sting,
Heal'd by the pleasing antidote of sounds.
When Sirius reigns, and the sun's parching beams
Bake the dry gaping surface, visit thou
Each even and morn, with quick observant eye,
Thy panting pack. If, in dark sullen mood,
The glouting hound refuse his wonted meal,
Retiring to some close obscure retreat,
Gloomy, disconsolate; with speed remove
The poor infectious wretch, and in strong chains
Bind him, suspected. Thus that dire disease,
Which art can't cure, wise caution may prevent.
But, this neglected, soon expect a change,
A dismal change, confusion, frenzy, death!
Or, in some dark recess, the senseless brute

Sits, sadly pining; deep melancholy,
And black despair, upon his clouded brow
Hang lowering; from his half-opening jaws,
The clammy venom, and infectious froth,
Distilling fall; and from his lungs, inflamed,
Malignant vapours taint the ambient air,
Breathing perdition; his dim eyes are glazed,
He droops his pensive head; his trembling limbs
No more support his weight; abject he lies,
Dumb, spiritless, benumb'd; till death, at last,
Gracious attends, and kindly brings relief.
Or, if outrageous grown, behold, alas!
A yet more dreadful scene; his glaring eyes
Redden with fury; like some angry boar,
Churning, he foams, and, on his back, erect
His pointed bristles rise; his tail incurved
He drops; and, with harsh broken howlings, rends
The poison-tainted air; with rough hoarse voice
Incessant bays, and snuffs the infectious breeze;
This way and that he stares, aghast, and starts
At his own shade; jealous, as if he deem'd
The world his foes. If haply toward the stream
He cast his roving eye, cold horrour chills
His soul; averse, he flies, trembling, appall'd:
Now frantick, to the kennel's utmost verge,

Raving, he runs, and deals destruction round.
The pack fly diverse; for whate'er he meets,
Vengeful, he bites, and every bite is death.
If now, perchance, through the weak fence escaped,
Far up the wind he roves, with open mouth
Inhales the cooling breeze, nor man, nor beast,
He spares, implacable. The hunter-horse,
Once kind associate of his sylvan toils,
Who haply, now, without the kennel's mound,
Crops the rank mead, and, listening, hears with joy
The cheering cry, that morn and eve salutes
His raptured sense, a wretched victim falls.
Unhappy quadruped! no more, alas!
Shall thy fond master with his voice applaud
Thy gentleness, thy speed; or with his hand
Stroke thy soft dappled sides, as he each day
Visits thy stall, well pleased: no more shalt thou
With sprightly neighings, to the winding horn
And the loud-opening pack, in concert join'd,
Glad his proud heart; for, oh! the secret wound,
Rankling, inflames; he bites the ground, and dies.
Hence to the village, with pernicious haste,
Baleful, he bends his course: the village flies,
Alarm'd; the tender mother, in her arms,
Hugs close the trembling babe; the doors are barr'd;

And flying curs, by native instinct taught,
Shun the contagious bane; the rustick bands
Hurry to arms, the rude militia seize
Whate'er at hand they find; clubs, forks, or guns,
From every quarter charge the furious foe,
In wild disorder and uncouth array;
Till now, with wounds on wounds, oppress'd and gored,
At one short poisonous gasp he breathes his last.
Hence, to the kennel, Muse, return, and view,
With heavy heart, that hospital of woe,
Where horrour stalks at large! insatiate death
Sits growling o'er his prey; each hour presents
A different scene of ruin and distress.
How busy art thou, fate! and how severe
Thy pointed wrath! the dying and the dead
Promiscuous lie; o'er these, the living fight
In one eternal broil; not conscious why,
Nor yet with whom. So drunkards, in their cups,
Spare not their friends, while senseless squabble reigns.
Huntsman! it much behoves thee to avoid
The perilous debate. Ah! rouse up all
Thy vigilance, and tread the treacherous ground
With careful step. Thy fires unquench'd preserve,

As erst the vestal flame; the pointed steel
In the hot embers hide; and if, surprised,
Thou feel'st the deadly bite, quick urge it home
Into the recent sore, and cauterize
The wound: spare not thy flesh, nor dread the event;
Vulcan shall save, when Æsculapius fails.
Here, should the knowing Muse recount the means
To stop this growing plague. And here, alas!
Each hand presents a sovereign cure, and boasts
Infallibility, but boasts in vain.
On this depend; each to his separate seat
Confine, in fetters bound; give each his mess
Apart, his range in open air; and then,
If deadly symptoms, to thy grief, appear,
Devote the wretch; and let him greatly fall,
A generous victim for the public weal.
Sing, philosophick Muse, the dire effects
Of this contagious bite on hapless man!
The rustick swains, by long tradition taught,
Of leeches old, as soon as they perceive
The bite impress'd, to the sea-coasts repair.
Plunged in the briny flood, the unhappy youth
Now journeys home, secure; but soon shall wish
The seas, as yet, had cover'd him beneath
The foaming surge, full many a fathom deep.

A fate more dismal, and superiour ills,
Hang o'er his head devoted. When the moon,
Closing her monthly round, returns again
To glad the night, or when, full-orb'd, she shines
High in the vault of heaven, the lurking pest
Begins the dire assault. The poisonous foam,
Through the deep wound instill'd, with hostile rage,
And all its fiery particles, saline,
Invades the arterial fluid; whose red waves
Tempestuous heave, and, their cohesion broke,
Fermenting boil; intestine war ensues,
And order to confusion turns, embroil'd.
Now the distended vessels scarce contain
The wild uproar, but press each weaker part,
Unable to resist: the tender brain
And stomach suffer most; convulsions shake
His trembling nerves, and wandering pungent pains
Pinch sore the sleepless wretch; his fluttering pulse
Oft intermits; pensive and sad, he mourns
His cruel fate, and to his weeping friends
Laments in vain: to hasty anger prone,
Resents each slight offence, walks with quick step,
And wildly stares: at last, with boundless sway,
The tyrant frenzy reigns; for, as the dog,
Whose fatal bite convey'd the infectious bane,

Raving, he foams, and howls, and barks, and bites!
Like agitations in his boiling blood,
Present like species to his troubled mind;
His nature, and his actions, all canine.
So, as old Homer sung, the associates wild
Of wandering Ithacus, by Circe's charms
To swine transform'd, ran gruntling through the groves,
Dreadful example to a wicked world!
See, there distress'd he lies! parch'd up with thirst,
But dares not drink; till now, at last, his soul
Trembling escapes, her noisome dungeon leaves,
And to some purer region wings away.
One labour yet remains, celestial Maid!
Another element demands thy song.
No more o'er craggy steeps, through coverts thick
With pointed thorn, and briers intricate,
Urge on, with horn and voice, the painful pack;
But skim, with wanton wing, the irriguous vale,
Where winding streams, amid the flowery meads,
Perpetual glide along, and undermine
The cavern'd banks, by the tenacious roots
Of hoary willows arch'd; gloomy retreat
Of the bright scaly kind; where they, at will,
On the green watery reed, their pasture, graze,

Suck the moist soil, or slumber at their ease,
Rock'd by the restless brook, that draws aslope
Its humid train, and laves their dark abodes.
Where rages not oppression? where, alas,
Is innocence secure? Rapine and spoil
Haunt even the lowest deeps; seas have their sharks;
Rivers and ponds inclose the ravenous pike;
He, in his turn, becomes a prey; on him
The amphibious otter feasts. Just is his fate,
Deserved; but tyrants know no bounds: nor spears
That bristle on his back, defend the perch
From his wide greedy jaws; nor burnish'd mail
The yellow carp; nor all his arts can save
The insinuating eel, that hides his head
Beneath the slimy mud; nor yet escapes
The crimson-spotted trout, the river's pride,
And beauty of the stream. Without remorse,
This midnight pillager, ranging around,
Insatiate, swallows all. The owner mourns
The unpeopled rivulet, and gladly hears
The huntsman's early call, and sees with joy
The jovial crew, that march upon its banks
In gay parade, with bearded lances arm'd.
This subtle spoiler of the beaver kind,
Far off perhaps, where ancient alders shade

The deep still pool, within some hollow trunk
Contrives his wicker couch; whence he surveys
His long purlieu, lord of the stream, and all
The finny shoals his own. But you, brave youths,
Dispute the felon's claim; try every root,
And every reedy bank; encourage all
The busy spreading pack, that fearless plunge
Into the flood, and cross the rapid stream.
Bid rocks and caves, and each resounding shore,
Proclaim your bold defiance; loudly raise
Each cheering voice, till distant hills repeat
The triumphs of the vale. On the soft sand,
See there, his seal impress'd; and, on that bank,
Behold the glittering spoils, half-eaten fish,
Scales, fins, and bones, the leavings of his feast.
Ah! on that yielding sag-bed, see, once more
His seal I view. O'er yon dank rushy marsh
The sly goose-footed prowler bends his course,
And seeks the distant shallows. Huntsman! bring
Thy eager pack, and trail him to his couch.
Hark! the loud peal begins; the clamorous joy,
The gallant chiding, loads the trembling air.

Ye Naiads fair, who o'er these floods preside,
Raise up your dripping heads above the wave,
And hear our melody. The harmonious notes

Float with the stream; and every winding creek,
And hollow rock, that o'er the dimpling flood
Nods pendent, still improve, from shore to shore,
Our sweet reiterated joys. What shouts!
What clamour loud! What gay, heart-cheering sounds
Urge, through the breathing brass their mazy way!
Not choirs of Tritons glad, with sprightlier strains,
The dancing billows, when proud Neptune rides
In triumph o'er the deep. How greedily
They snuff the fishy steam, that to each blade,
Rank-scenting, clings! See! how the morning dews
They sweep, that from their feet, besprinkling, drop,
Dispersed, and leave a track oblique behind.
Now on firm land they range; then in the flood
They plunge tumultuous; or through reedy pools,
Rustling, they work their way: no holt escapes
Their curious search. With quick sensation now
The fuming vapour stings, flutters their hearts,
And joy, redoubled, bursts from every mouth,
In louder symphonies. Yon hollow trunk,
That, with its hoary head incurved, salutes
The passing wave, must be the tyrant's fort,
And dread abode. How these impatient climb,
While others, at the root, incessant bay:
They put him down. See, there he dives along!

The ascending bubbles mark his gloomy way.
Quick fix the nets, and cut off his retreat
Into the sheltering deeps. Ah, there he vents!
The pack plunge headlong, and protended spears
Menace destruction: while the troubled surge
Indignant foams, and all the scaly kind,
Affrighted, hide their heads. Wild tumult reigns,
And loud uproar. Ah, there once more he vents!
See, that bold hound has seized him; down they sink
Together, lost: but soon shall he repent
His rash assault. See, there escaped, he flies,
Half-drown'd, and clambers up the slippery bank,
With ooze and blood distain'd. Of all the brutes,
Whether by nature form'd, or by long use,
This artful diver best can bear the want
Of vital air. Unequal is the fight,
Beneath the whelming element. Yet there
He lives not long; but respiration needs,
At proper intervals: again he vents;
Again the crowd attack. That spear has pierced
His neck; the crimson waves confess the wound.
Fix'd is the bearded lance, unwelcome guest,
Where'er he flies; with him it sinks beneath,
With him it mounts; sure guide to every foe.
Inly he groans; nor can his tender wound

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Bear the cold stream. Lo! to yon sedgy bank
He creeps, disconsolate: his numerous foes
Surround him, hounds, and men. Pierced through
and through,
On pointed spears they lift him high in air;
Wriggling, he hangs, and grins, and bites in vain.
Bid the loud horns, in gaily-warbling strains,
Proclaim the felon's fate; he dies, he dies!
Rejoice, ye scaly tribes; and, leaping, dance
Above the wave, in sign of liberty
Restored: the cruel tyrant is no more.
Rejoice, secure and bless'd; did not as yet
Remain, some of your own rapacious kind;
And man, fierce man, with all his various wiles.
O happy, if ye knew your happy state,
Ye rangers of the fields! whom nature boon
Cheers with her smiles, and every element
Conspires to bless. What, if no heroes frown
From marble pedestals; nor Raphael's works,
Nor Titian's lively tints, adorn our walls?
Yet these the meanest of us may behold;
And, at another's cost, may feast at will
Our wondering eyes; what can the owner more?
But vain, alas! is wealth, not graced with power.
The flowery landscape, and the gilded dome,

And vistas opening to the wearied eye,
Through all his wide domain; the planted grove,
The shrubby wilderness, with its gay choir
Of warbling birds, can't lull to soft repose
The ambitious wretch, whose discontented soul
Is harrow'd day and night; he mourns, he pines,
Until his prince's favour makes him great.
See there he comes, the exalted idol comes!
The circle's form'd, and all his fawning slaves
Devoutly bow to earth; from every mouth
The nauseous flattery flows, which he returns
With promises, that die as soon as born.
Vile intercourse! where virtue has no place.
Frown but the monarch, all his glories fade;
He mingles with the throng, outcast, undone,
The pageant of a day; without one friend
To sooth his tortured mind; all, all are fled.
For though they bask'd in his meridian ray,
The insects vanish, as his beams decline.
Not such our friends; for here no dark design,
No wicked interest, bribes the venal heart;
But inclination to our bosom leads,
And weds them there for life; our social cups
Smile, as we smile; open, and unreserved.
We speak our inmost souls; good humour, mirth,

Soft complaisance, and wit from malice free,
Smooth every brow, and glow on every cheek.
O happiness sincere! what wretch would groan
Beneath the galling load of power, or walk
Upon the slippery pavements of the great,
Who thus could reign, unenvied and secure?
Ye guardian powers, who make mankind your care,
Give me to know wise nature's hidden depths,
Trace each mysterious cause, with judgment read
The expanded volume, and, submiss, adore
That great creative will, who, at a word,
Spoke forth the wonderous scene. But if my soul
To this gross clay confined, flutters on earth
With less ambitious wing; unskill'd to range
From orb to orb, where Newton leads the way;
And, view with piercing eyes, the grand machine;
Worlds above worlds, subservient to his voice;
Who, veil'd in clouded majesty, alone
Gives light to all; bids the great system move,
And changeful seasons, in their turns, advance,
Unmoved, unchanged himself: yet this, at least,
Grant me propitious, an inglorious life,
Calm and serene, nor lost in false pursuits
Of wealth or honours; but enough to raise
My drooping friends, preventing modest want

That dares not ask. And if, to crown my joys,
Ye grant me health, that, ruddy in my cheeks,
Blooms in my life's decline; fields, woods, and streams,
Each towering hill, each humble vale below,
Shall hear my cheering voice; my hounds shall wake
The lazy morn, and glad the horizon round.

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